

Achieving Excellence and Equity

2021 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan

“The ICEA feels that Scottish education exhibits many strengths. It values equity as well as excellence. It has an excellent standing internationally. It is investing effort and resources to narrow attainment gaps, working with and strengthening the teaching profession.”

International Council of Education Advisers, December 2020

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Foreword

This has been a year like no other. Our response to COVID-19 has demonstrated the collective strengths of our education system, as we worked together to mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic on our learners.

The positive values and ethos of Scottish education, and especially the shared commitment of equity, has been essential this year. This underpinned the quick action that local authorities took in March to establish the hubs which provided support to the most vulnerable young people and the children of key workers. It was no surprise to me that so many of our dedicated school staff volunteered to work in the hubs to provide that support in the most unsettling of times. And I know how hard teachers worked to support their pupils and deliver remote learning while schools were closed.

The commitment of school leaders to reopen schools to all pupils in August, and to keep them safe, open and welcoming has been remarkable. All school staff have worked tirelessly throughout to continue to provide a high quality and rewarding learning environment and experience. I remain deeply grateful to each and every one of them.

I also want to pay tribute to our children and young people. Their energy and resilience to overcome the challenges of school closures and wider restrictions has been hugely impressive. I believe that Curriculum for Excellence, with its focus on breadth of learning and individual development, has helped Scotland's young people adapt to these changed circumstances this year.

On a related note, Scotland's score in the PISA 'global competency' assessment – where we ranked fourth across all participating nations - demonstrates the progress that Scotland has made in supporting young people to be well-informed and effective global citizens, and reflects the values set out in CfE.

Education recovery will be key in the year ahead, with a continued focus on health and wellbeing, as well as intensified support for reducing inequity and enabling the highest quality of learning and teaching.

This year's Improvement Plan, therefore, reflects this recovery agenda and sets out the action we will take over the coming year to redress the impact of 2020 on our young people. It is, as ever, informed by input from the International Council of Education Advisers, who have detailed knowledge and understanding of how others across the world are looking to address these challenges and what is working well. The outputs from our forthcoming Equity Audit will further improve our understanding of the targeted and specific action that is needed to offset the impact on those who may have been most affected by the pandemic.

I have no doubt that 2021 will also bring challenges, but I am confident that our young people and our schools will continue to rise to those challenges and that it will be another successful year for Scottish education.

John Swinney MSP

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

December 2020

Introduction, vision, and key priorities

Introduction

Background

The 2021 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan replaces last year's NIF and Improvement Plan. Together with the [National Improvement Framework Interactive Evidence Report](#), the NIF has improved the availability, quality and consistency of data, and extended understanding of what works to drive improvements for children and young people across all parts of the Scottish education system.

It sets out the vision and priorities for Scottish education that have been agreed across the system, and the national improvement activity that needs to be undertaken to help deliver those key priorities. This complements the ongoing implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), which are the three supporting pillars of the Scottish education system.

Scottish Ministers have a statutory duty, introduced by the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, to review the NIF and publish a plan on an annual basis. As part of the review, we provide education authorities, teachers, young people, and parents with the opportunity to express their views, and these have been taken into account in the drafting of this year's NIF and Improvement Plan.

Context

This has, indisputably, been a unique and difficult year. Barely three months after we had set out the priority improvement activities in the 2020 NIF and Improvement Plan, school buildings had closed and Scotland was dealing with the impact of a global pandemic. As a result, the Scottish education system had to react quickly, and decisively, and focus on ensuring that the business of teaching and learning continued, even while the majority of school buildings were closed. This meant that we had to review the focus of our activity, and place recovery and support to the education system at the heart of all our activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced unprecedented levels of uncertainty for people and education systems and, as a result, the review process in Autumn 2020 produced a clear consensus that broad stability in the NIF priorities and drivers of improvement was desirable. Equally, it will be important to ensure that the NIF reflects those changing priorities that have come about as a result of COVID-19, as well as reporting on the progress that was made to implement the improvement activities up to 20 March (when the school buildings closed). In particular, it is important that the NIF and Improvement Plan captures the recovery and support work that is being undertaken to deal with the educational impact of the COVID-19 crisis into 2021 and beyond.

A number of issues were raised during the review, including the need to focus on recovery, on providing certainty in a world where very little feels secure, and to ensure support is provided to those who need it most. There was also support for an increased focus on health and wellbeing, in particular the measures being taken to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and of staff, in the light of COVID-19. There should also be more emphasis placed on the needs of children and young people with additional support needs – something which has been identified and addressed via the actions that came out of Angela Morgan's [review of implementation of additional support for learning](#), and which are reflected in the improvement actions set out under each driver.

International Council of Education Advisers

The Deputy First Minister held a series of meetings with the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) in the period since the schools closed in March, in order to consider international approaches responding to the pandemic, and to see if there were any lessons Scotland could learn from other countries. A key issue for the ICEA was the need for the NIF to better reflect both the vision and holistic approach of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). It was their view that, at that point, the ‘excellence’ component of the NIF vision statement could be seen as placing a too narrow emphasis on literacy and numeracy, at the potential expense of the wider 4 capacities of CfE:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

The 4 capacities were designed to produce a more rounded education with broader achievements being recognised alongside academic attainment.

We have taken the ICEA’s feedback on board, and have made it clearer that the vision of the NIF is to ensure that every child has the skills and knowledge necessary for today’s world, and that of the future.

Despite all the difficulties the pandemic has caused, it is important that our education system continues to meet the aspirations and needs of our children and young people, and that is what drives the improvement activities outlined in the 2021 NIF and Improvement Plan.

The [second formal report of the ICEA](#) was published on 17 December 2020, and states that the “focus on capacity building at all levels within the teaching profession must continue to be the core of the Scottish improvement agenda and its desire to secure an enduring impact on the country’s future prosperity. This is central to Scotland’s resolve and determination to be a world-class education system committed to improvements in educational equity and excellence, and for student and staff well-being.”

“Navigating through the pandemic and designing the future of school improvement to support each and every student to develop and succeed will require continued development of capacity, leadership, collaboration, and professional judgement and expertise throughout the system. Valuing, respecting and supporting everyone who is involved is essential.”

The report makes a number of recommendations, which have informed the development of the 2021 NIF and Improvement plan. The Scottish Government will be publishing its formal response to the ICEA recommendations early in 2021.

Our vision for education in Scotland

- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors;
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

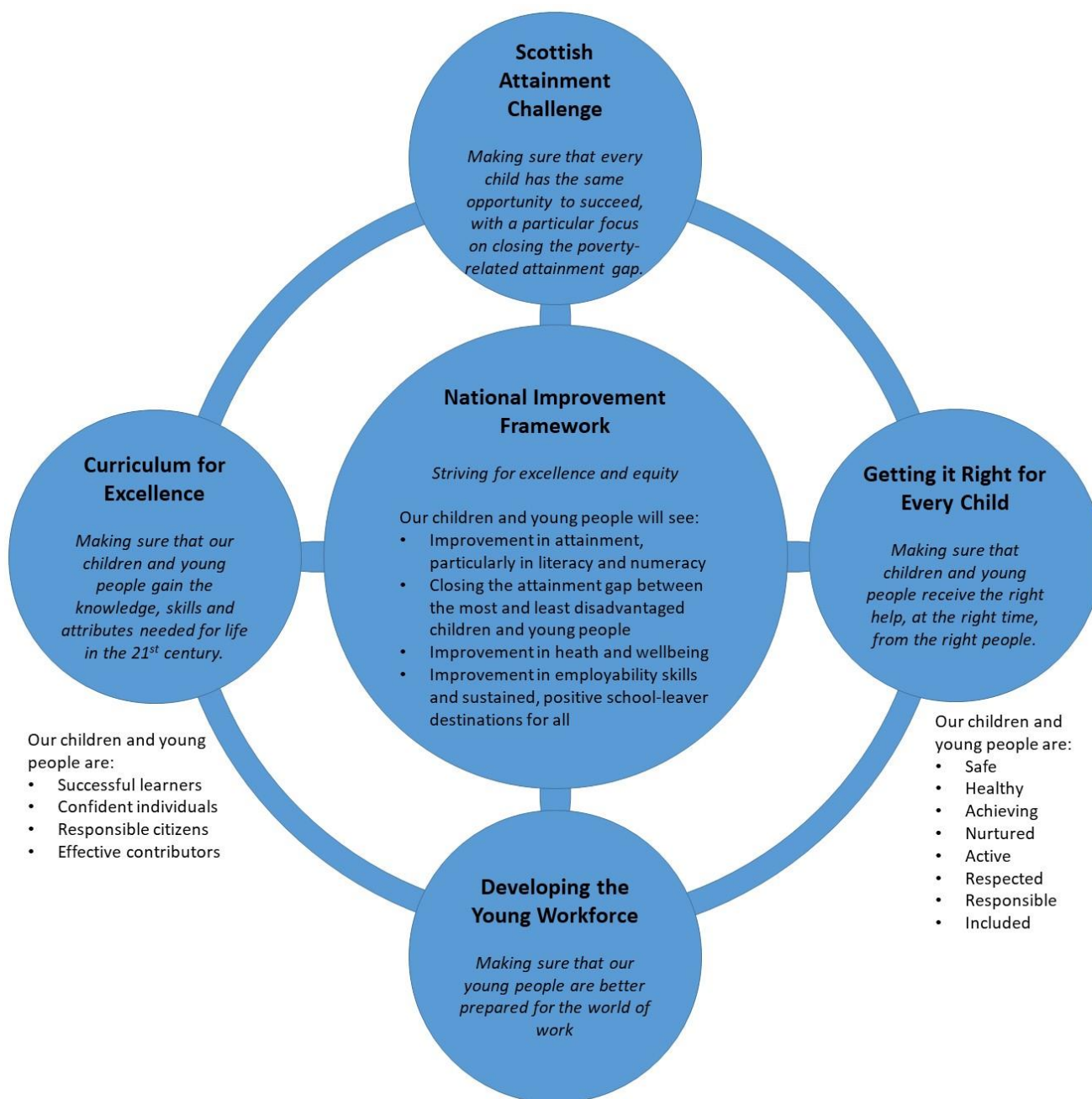
We need Scottish education to deliver both **excellence** in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering **equity** so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed, regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs.

In order to achieve this, we are working with our partners to develop an empowered and collaborative system, where everyone's contribution is heard and valued and improving children and young people's outcomes is at the heart of everything we do.

Key priorities of the National Improvement Framework

- **Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy**
- **Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people**
- **Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing**
- **Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people**

Relationship between the NIF and the other strategic frameworks in Scottish education



The response of the Scottish education system to COVID-19

The Scottish education system has responded collectively to mitigate the worst impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people across Scotland. The key principles of that response can be characterised as follows:

- **Partnership and collaboration** – as exemplified by the quick, local response to setting up childcare hubs, and the ongoing work of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG.)
- **Data and evidence led** – including drawing on the multi-disciplinary advice of the Scientific Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues
- **Agility and flexibility** – being quick to respond to rapidly-changing circumstances and evolving evidence
- **A priority on equity** – including via the initial childcare hubs, investment in digital devices, and ongoing provision of free school meals

At the start of 2020, we were building an empowered and collaborative education system, where decisions about children and young people's education were made as close to them as possible. This need for empowerment had been a common theme running through the advice and recommendations from the ICEA over the last 4 years, as was the need to strengthen collaboration at all levels of the system.

However on 20 March, as a result of COVID-19, we made the tough decision to close Scotland's schools and find new and innovative ways to continue the business of learning and teaching. At that point, the immediate priority became the need to ensure support was provided quickly to the most vulnerable children and families, many of whom relied on schools to provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment.

What became clear was that the work that had already taken place to strengthen leadership, and build collaboration throughout Scottish education, had laid a foundation for co-operation across Scotland. The education community demonstrated its determination to reduce the harms of school closure as much as possible. Food parcels and essential learning resources, including electronic devices and stationery, were delivered to those who needed them most. Staff worked tirelessly to protect the interests of our children and young people, and to ensure ongoing provision of free school meals.

Local authority teams worked quickly to establish childcare hubs for vulnerable children, and those of key workers, to allow their parents or carers to participate in the national response to COVID-19. These were run by dedicated school staff, and many community partners, who volunteered to support the hubs, which continued to run throughout the summer term and the school holidays.

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group

The Scottish Government established the [COVID-19 Education Recovery Group](#) (CERG) to bring together key stakeholders and decision makers from across the Scottish education system, to enable effective collaboration and work across organisational and structural boundaries to support the response and recovery efforts. Working with CERG, the Scottish Government produced and published a strategic framework for the reopening of schools, which was based on the consensus view at the time that physical distancing in schools was going to be a necessity for some considerable time to come. One member of the ICEA

described the strategic framework as ‘the best scenario building paper on school re-opening he had seen anywhere in the world’.¹

Subsequently, there was a sustained downward trend in COVID-19 infections and deaths in Scotland, and it became possible to plan for pupils to return to school full time in August. The return to full time schooling was considered to be the best possible outcome given the impact that school closure had on children and young people across Scotland, particularly those from a disadvantaged background. For example, we knew from the [Lockdown Lowdown](#), a survey carried out by the Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot, that over two-fifths of young people were concerned about school closures, and almost the same number were concerned about their mental wellbeing.

Although Scotland’s schools returned full time in August, this earlier work to develop remote or blended learning models remains an essential contingency. We know that there may be circumstances in which, based on clear evidence and public health considerations, or other relevant factors (e.g. minimum staffing requirements) specific schools require either to close, or to implement remote learning, for a defined period of time.

Recovery and continuity

In recognition of the need for more granular scientific advice on education and children’s issues, the Scottish Government established a sub-group of the main COVID-19 Advisory Group. [The Scientific Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues](#) has produced a suite of advice which informed the development of [guidance](#) to support a safe return to school in August. The guidance has been updated on a regular basis to support the continuing safe implementation of a full-time return to school, and to reflect the new levels approach within [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Scotland’s Strategic Framework](#). It takes full account of the evolving COVID-19 situation in Scotland, the experience of reopening schools to date, the advice received from scientific and public health experts, and the advice of CERG and other key stakeholders including children and young people.

We are still in the midst of a pandemic and, even while the schools are open, some learners will have experienced interrupted learning for a range of reasons. As we continue through the academic year, Scotland’s schools, teachers, and other educators, will face many new challenges, and it is vital to ensure that everyone in the education system has the support necessary to meet the wide and varied needs of all learners.

The Scottish Government remains committed to facilitating greater school-based decision making, and will engage with this again, once the education system in Scotland agrees collectively that it has sufficient capacity to do so. A key part of this will be reflecting on what has been learned during the pandemic, and considering how key issues including budgets, improvement, curriculum choice, and staffing decisions can be managed in an empowered and resilient system going forward.

Effective leadership has been, and will continue to be, fundamental to recovery. This has also been emphasised by the ICEA, which highlighted that school leaders are in the front line of COVID-19 on a daily basis. That is why a clear recovery support system is required for teachers and school leaders.

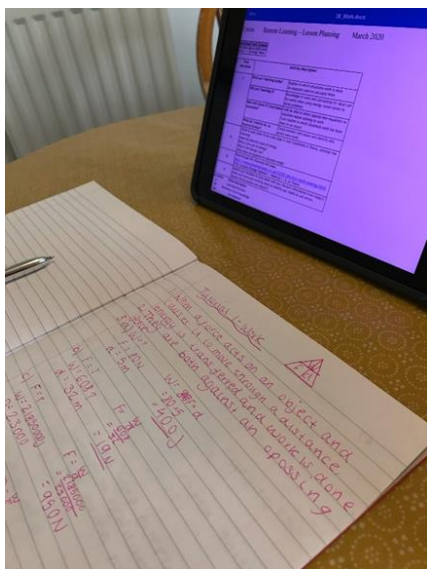
It is also important that education recovery is not seem as simply aiming to return Scottish education to the way it was before the pandemic hit. Scotland’s response to the pandemic

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/international-council-of-education-advisers-virtual-meeting-april-2020/>

has highlighted the importance of creating a more flexible and resilient system, which can operate just as well in a crisis as it does under more normal circumstances.

The need to focus on education recovery support, and build a more resilient system, is reflected throughout the improvement activities set out in this NIF and Improvement Plan.

COVID-19 Case Study – Peebles High School



Scottish Borders Council has introduced the Inspire Learning Programme with tablets, to raise attainment and support equity and inclusion for all pupils. At Peebles High School, the programme came into its own during lockdown, when it played a significant part in supporting students' learning. On the tablet, teachers had access to a suite of applications, including Glow 365 apps, which enabled them to set up "live lessons" for students, as well as to support students' learning at their own pace. The ability to record teacher voice notes to give feedback was both time efficient, and added a personal touch which is often missing in online teaching. Students prefer to have verbal feedback from their own teachers.

Much of the practice that had sustained us in lockdown proved to be just as valuable on our welcome return to face to face teaching in August. Many students enjoy the personalisation and choice afforded by ready access to core digital resources. Digital formative assessment activities have been effective and help maintain engagement during triple periods, which have been introduced to reduce movement around the school in the senior phase. Mixed delivery is another new format we have been able to incorporate into our teaching repertoire. Students who are self-isolating can join a subject Team, including Teams meetings and participate in the classroom learning experience to stay on track with their learning.

COVID-19 Case Study - Glasgow Recovery Curriculum

The Glasgow Recovery Curriculum provided a framework within which schools could plan the curriculum, in their context, for children returning after lockdown. It linked national guidance to key issues and priorities in the Glasgow Improvement Challenge, and to issues from the impact of lockdown. It emphasised every school should identify a rationale for their Recovery Curriculum linked to the refreshed Curriculum for Excellence narrative.

The guidance highlighted the need for an initial focus on health and wellbeing to support children with understanding their experience of lockdown. The Glasgow Improvement Challenge is about improving levels of literacy and numeracy so this was a priority in the Recovery Curriculum, but feedback from our parents indicated that they did not want a narrow curriculum for their children on their return to school, so the guidance emphasised schools should plan in all curricular areas.

The issues were the need to identify lost learning through well planned learning, not through standardised tests; the importance of maximising the opportunities provided by learning outside and exploring interdisciplinary learning, especially in secondary schools. The Glasgow Improvement Challenge developed 3 modules: Holistic Assessment, Bridging the Gap and Approaches to Differentiation, to support teachers in delivering their planned

curriculum and extended the literacy, numeracy and STEM frameworks with outdoor learning activities.

The impact of the Recovery Curriculum was that all schools effectively identified children's levels of well-being. Teachers were highly effective in identifying any learning loss, and planning experiences to support recovery; children quickly made progress in literacy and numeracy and were given exciting outdoor learning experiences in all areas of the curriculum. In all schools, Glasgow children and young people made a positive return to school.

COVID-19 Case Study – Renfrewshire's local education recovery plan



Build Back Better

The main objective of our recovery plan was to support the safety, wellbeing, resilience and successful transition back into establishments for all children and young people.

The plan was underpinned by an evidence based conceptual framework, Build Back Better. It took cognisance of national guidance as well as enabling establishments and services to devise their own individual recovery plans, based on the specific circumstances they operate within.

In line with the conceptual framework, phased strategic outcomes were developed under five operational domains of action by a recovery planning group. Operational plans with clear timescales were subsequently developed to take forward the outcomes.

A cross-service governance board provided strategic leadership and expertise ensuring the achievement of the strategic outcomes and vision. The board included representatives from a range of services in the local authority. This collaborative approach was a strength of the strategy.

As part of our improvement journey, an evaluation framework was built into the plan to help us understand the overall impact, challenges and lessons learned.

The conceptual framework provided a clear recovery planning tool which was practical and flexible, allowing efforts to be coordinated across the system.

All establishments re-opened with supportive risk assessments in place. With a strong focus on the overall health and wellbeing of all, children, young people and staff transitioned back safely to their establishments.

Education recovery in 2020/21

Since the onset of COVID-19, the Scottish Government has placed protecting the interests of children and young people at the heart of our response. Schools remaining safe, open and welcoming – with a focus on health, wellbeing and intensified support for reducing inequity and enabling the highest quality of learning and teaching – has been a critical component of that priority. We know lockdown has been particularly difficult for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the forthcoming Equity Audit will provide more detail on those issues.

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. There are many excellent teachers, schools, and colleges in Scotland providing a high quality education to our children and young people. In these uncertain times, it is more important than ever that we continue to recognise the great work being done in many of Scotland's schools, and the achievements of our children and young people. Those who work with schools, such as local authorities, national agencies and RICs, must do everything possible to support schools with the education recovery effort and to intensify and deepen progress with our pursuit of achieving excellence and equity.

Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs)

Prior to the disruption caused by COVID-19, there was gathering momentum around collaboration within and across the 6 RICs, building upon the progress made in previous years. This was supported by the regional teams within Education Scotland, with more frequent information-sharing, and data driven discussions around improvement.

The latest RIC regional improvement plans take account of the ongoing challenges resulting from COVID-19 and, as a result, have a strong focus on educational recovery and renewal, as well as support for the developing national e-learning offer (set out in more detail below).

Education Scotland

Education Scotland has had, and will continue to have, a substantial national advisory role in relation to education recovery.

To support education recovery, Education Scotland has reviewed its [corporate plan](#) with a clear aim to support “*recovery, quality, and improvement in Scottish education and thereby securing the delivery of better learning experiences, and excellence and equity, for Scottish learners.*” All of Education Scotland's work in the 2020/21 school year will address one of four priorities:

- System leadership
- Collaboration
- Education support and improvement
- Professional learning

The health and wellbeing of school staff is key to addressing all of those priorities in this recovery year. Education Scotland will work with key partners to pilot and evaluate a package of support focused on educator wellbeing which contains three main elements:

- a. Mental health support for the schools workforce with access to reflective supervision.
- b. Coaching and mentoring education system offer.
- c. Enhanced support for post-probation teachers.

a. Reflective supervision for educators will help support the mental wellbeing of staff who provide regular, close support to children, young people and families who themselves have experienced, or are experiencing their own significant distress and/or trauma.

b. Education Scotland has also put in place a 1-2-1 coaching offer for Headteachers which will be widened out to other educators from January 2021 as well as a programme to support post-probation teachers. The coaching and mentoring offer provides professional learning to increase the coaching and mentoring capacity within the education system to ensure that there is long term sustainability in developing an established coaching culture, and offers immediate access to coaching and mentoring for target groups to provide targeted and intensive support.

c. 'Stepping Stones: Support for teachers in their early career', is the package of enhanced support for post-probation teachers and represents accelerated and focused support for school staff which builds on pre-existing work which had been progressing in partnership with stakeholders prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. This package will include a space on the Education Scotland Professional Learning resource which will provide access to a series of workshops, online national 'Blethers', Coaching and Mentoring Matters resources and specific PLAs. This package of support is designed to provide immediate support to the education system.

In addition to supporting the wellbeing of teachers, Education Scotland continues to provide mental health and wellbeing learning and teaching resources for teachers to meet the needs of all children and young people through the recovery period. Many of these have been collated here: <https://education.gov.scot/media/ajhbcvmx/positive-mental-wellbeing-resources.pdf>.

Professional learning will largely be delivered online, which has proven to be very successful, however Education Scotland is ready to re-introduce some face-to-face learning when it is safe to do so. The national offer will be flexible and responsive to the kinds of support that individual practitioners need as we progress through the recovery year. Having a national focus for support to the system allows for faster dissemination of good practice and enables practitioners from across Scotland to benefit from the best of practice.

Education Scotland will continue to work in partnership with local authorities and RICs to ensure the support offered at all levels of the system is meeting the needs of the profession. Education Scotland will continue to provide updates of key national messages relating to learning, teaching and assessment and moderation through appropriate forums.

To support headteachers during lockdown, more opportunities to engage online were offered, including a range of 'Headspace' sessions designed to offer a space for headteachers to share issues and challenges and benefit from the experience of others. Eight online sessions for headteachers were offered as part the Headspace 2019/20 programme of events. Themes included early learning and primary transitions, secondary transitions, leading remote learning, leadership in challenging times, health and wellbeing for headteachers, and recovery planning for schools, including a Blether with colleagues in public health. Over 200 headteachers joined these Headspace sessions and 'Big Blether' events.

National e-learning offer

Although schools are open, we are continuing to develop support for remote learning, including through [Glow](#) (the national online learning environment which is freely available to all learners and teachers in Scotland) [Scotland Learns](#) and the [National e-learning Offer](#). The offer, which has been developed in partnership between the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, e-Sgoil, the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), and the Regional Improvement Collaboratives, complements the online learning being provided by schools, local authorities and RICs across Scotland and covers the key themes of “live” (i.e. provision of live, synchronised learning and teaching), “recorded” (provision of recorded lesson content) and “supported” (online learning and teaching resources), as well as associated professional development support for practitioners.

- *Live:* [E-Sgoil](#), originally created to offer greater learning opportunities for pupils in the Western Isles, provides online learning resources and live learning and teaching across primary and secondary levels. Since September 2020, e-Sgoil has had in place programmes across BGE and senior phase to support schools’ contingency plans, and e-Sgoil has responded to all requests made by schools to support young people learning at home whilst self-isolating. Almost 3000 young people from 273 secondary schools across all local authorities have made over 7000 registrations to access senior phase study support webinars. E-Sgoil will continue to develop its offer during 2021, and will continue as a key aspect within the national offer.
- *Recorded:* Work is being undertaken by the [West Partnership](#) to provide a package of recorded lessons for schools to access across Scotland. 195 recorded lessons are now available for use in the senior phase and a further 53 in BGE. The [Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative](#) and South East Improvement Collaborative are developing further recorded content. Further content will be added in relation to physical education, modern studies, chemistry, interdisciplinary learning, English and other subject areas, and we will continue to work with all RICs to develop arrangements within their own regions and across Scotland.
- *Supported:* Education Scotland has been working with several hundred practitioners from local authorities across Scotland to prepare, quality assure and share supported learning and digital materials. Around 14,000 sets of materials across 14 subjects are currently available. Further work will be taken forward to increase the offer by encouraging contributions from across the education community. This will include content that has been filmed in partnership with SSERC, BBC Bitesize, Edinburgh Napier University and other partners as well as additional subject content on Physical Education, English, Modern Studies and Modern Languages.
- Support for professional learning is developing more skilled and confident teachers. Our teachers and schools retain the leadership role in order to determine the precise arrangements for remote learning for their learners. [DigiLearn](#) provides support on how to use digital tools and pedagogical approaches to deliver online learning, including engaging learners with active digital learning, live mixed delivery between school and home, and creating videos for learners. Since March 2020, Digilearn has received around 80,000 visits and over 179,000 page views, with nearly 3,000 hours of YouTube resources viewed. In addition, over 7,000 practitioners have benefited from 127 webinars

on digital learning and teaching. Further support will continue to reflect the professional learning priorities of practitioners

The National e-learning offer will continue across all four aspects. Detailed improvement activity is set out under each driver of improvement.

Digital Inclusion

The experience of lockdown also demonstrated that access to technology is essential to securing excellence and equity in education in Scotland. The Scottish Government is investing £25 million to support digital inclusion amongst disadvantaged children and young people. Funding allocations for digital devices and connectivity solutions have been made to all 32 local authorities for them to secure connection packages and laptops/devices to meet local needs. At end-November 2020, almost 50,000 devices and over 9,000 connectivity solutions had been distributed to learners across Scotland. In total, the programme is expected to benefit up to 70,000 disadvantaged children and young people.

National Improvement Hub

A number of schools continue to drive forward good practice during this recovery period. Education Scotland has collected examples of effective practice and published them on the [National Improvement Hub](#) to celebrate the work of staff in ensuring children and young people enjoy high-quality learning experiences. These include outdoor learning before and into the recovery phase at [Gartocharn primary school](#) in West Dunbartonshire, [Grange primary school](#) in Angus ensuring that no child misses out, and approaches to moderation leading to high quality learning, teaching, and assessment at [Townhill primary school](#) in Fife.

The Hub also highlights a partnership project which was developed in [Royston](#), Glasgow, using a family learning approach to safe play during COVID-19. The project helps parents to develop the skills and confidence to support their child with their learning, health and wellbeing and any additional identified needs.

SQA support for assessment in 2020/21

[Professor Priestley's Review of the National Qualifications 2020 experience and the report's recommendations](#), helped inform the approach to assessment and certification set out by the Deputy First Minister to Parliament on 7 October. The first recommendation from the review, was the suspension of the 2021 National 5 exam diet. In view of that recommendation, and having consulted widely, including through the CERG and with learners, teachers and parents, the Deputy First Minister decided to cancel National 5 examinations in 2021. Furthermore, unavoidable COVID-19 related disruption to learning means that it is impossible to guarantee that all learners will be in a position to have the best chance of performing to their true potential in exams in 2021. As a result the Deputy First Minister announced to Parliament on 8 December that Higher and Advanced Higher exams would not go ahead in 2021.

The measures being put in place for 2020-21 are: that National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers will be awarded based on an alternative assessment model, rather than the usual exam. An individual pupils' work and teachers will determine grades, not an exam; with the emphasis being on quality not quantity of evidence.

SQA is engaging widely and has set up a National Qualifications 2021 Group with representation from key stakeholders to develop and disseminate advice for National 5 courses and this model will form the basis of the arrangements for Higher and Advanced Higher. The group will meet weekly to drive and monitor progress.

It is supported by a working group (also chaired by SQA with membership reflecting its strategic counterpart) which has developed [subject-specific guidance](#) for National 5 courses, has co-created advice on the alternative certification approach for National 5, and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

More widely, SQA has taken note of the findings of the Professor Priestley review, as well as its own lessons learned from awarding in 2020, and will be reflecting on these as it delivers the arrangements for 2021. SQA is also reviewing its appeals process to ensure it aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This will include consulting with relevant stakeholders, including young people.

Mental health and wellbeing

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing was a key focus within plans and approaches to educational recovery.

Our guidance on the delivery of a recovery curriculum and continuity in learning, published in June, both highlighted the importance of recognising the impact of COVID-19 and school closure on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

As part of our plans for the return to school, we published a new document which brings together the resources which are available to school staff to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The resource highlights materials to support learning and sources of support for school staff, on particular matters. This publication delivered the first element of the three part Programme for Government commitments, further details of which are provided below.

The Scottish Government's commitment to supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing was already in place, including increased support for pupils, delivered through schools. Education authorities responded positively to the increased concerns for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and sought to deliver earlier than anticipated, wherever possible, the commitment to access to counselling support through schools. There was significant progress in the delivery of this commitment, and there is now in place access to counselling support through schools across Scotland.

A Mental Health In Schools working group has been established to support the Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to supporting positive mental health in children and young people in school. A contractor has been appointed by the Scottish Government to develop an online, open access Professional Learning Resource in Mental Health & Wellbeing for all school staff across Primary and Secondary education in Scotland.

As part of the development of the free training resource for all school staff, the project team will consult with school staff, children and young people and families on what should be included to assist school staff to best support positive mental health in school. The contractor will report on a regular basis to the Scottish Government and the Mental Health in Schools Working Group. To complement the professional learning resource and the publication of resources, the Group are also developing a Framework for a Whole School

Approach to support children and young people's positive mental health and wellbeing. The framework will provide school leaders and practitioners with guidance on measures that can be introduced across the full aspect of a school day to support mental wellbeing, both in children and young people and in the school environment.

It is expected that this training and whole school approach framework will be available by Spring 2021 and will deliver the final element of this Programme for Government commitment

Improving the voice of young people

Children and young people's experiences and opinions of the impact of COVID-19 are a vital aspect of the recovery process. To make sure that young people's voices can be heard, Young Scot is in the process of establishing an Education Recovery Youth Panel, as a successor to the successful Scottish Learner Panel project. It will consist of around 25 learners from across Scotland, aged between 9 and 18 years old. The panel will meet on a monthly basis and will have regular opportunities to meet and provide feedback to the Deputy First Minister. Recommendations from the panel, will feed into CERG, which already includes a member from the Scottish Youth Parliament. Together with the learner engagement strategy being developed by the SQA, all of these activities will ensure the rights and needs of young people are at the heart of the next steps in education recovery.

Delivering improvement

The primary purpose of the National Improvement Framework since January 2016 has been to bring together an enhanced range of information and data at all levels of the system, to drive improvement for children and young people in early learning and childcare settings, schools, and colleges across the whole of Scotland. The Scottish Attainment Challenge has also become a rich source of information about good practice in schools, and how high-quality teaching and learning delivers improvements in outcomes.

However, COVID-19 has also had an impact on the collection of some of the data that informs the NIF. In particular, the Scottish Government decided that the collection of Achievement of CfE level (ACEL) data for 2019/20 should not go ahead.

The Scottish Government has collected and published this data since 2017. It provides information on the progress that children and young people in P1, P4, P7 and S3 are making in reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy. This data has also been available to schools and local authorities to assist with improvement planning.

While the schools were closed, it was impossible to gather the 2019/20 ACEL data in the normal way. A number of possible options for collecting the data were considered, including asking teachers to make an estimate, based on their professional judgement, of whether children and young people have achieved the relevant CfE level on the census date of 8 June 2020. Other options would be to have a census date of 20 March (when the schools closed), collecting aggregated data at stage level, using data from a sample of schools and/or local authorities, or collecting the data once the schools re-open.

However, there were potential complications with each option, and we could not be sure the data would be comparable with previous years, or whether it could be used effectively to assess progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap, or to target local improvement work. This meant that the purpose and value of the data collection at both a national and local level was compromised and was, therefore, deemed to provide less benefit than providing schools and education authorities the space required to deal with the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis.

This has left a 2019/20 gap in ACEL data, and in our ability to report progress against the 11 key measures later on in the NIF. This is far from ideal, particularly given the Scottish Government's focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. However, even if we had proceeded with one of the options for collecting the data, it would still not be directly comparable to previous or future years.

At the moment, the latest evidence is demonstrating that there have been improvements in the percentage of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training and employment, and in the percentage of primary and secondary pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels relevant to their stage in both literacy and numeracy. However, the picture is more mixed for the percentage of pupils leaving schools with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Levels 4, 5 and 6.

Over 71,000 skills-based qualifications were achieved this year, compared to around 48,000 in 2014 (from 47,747 to 71,723). The proportion of school leavers looked after within the last year attaining 1 or more qualifications at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 increased from 62% in 2012/13 to 70% in 2018/19. There has also been a year on year increase in the proportion of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF 5 and above. From 7.3% in

2013/14 to 9% in 2014/15, 10.7% in 2015/16, 12.8% in 2016/17, 14.8% in 2017/18 and 17.1% in 2018/19

We know that more needs to be done to continue to improve outcomes for all our children and young people.

At national level, this Improvement Plan summarises the key evidence and identifies new improvement activity that the Scottish Government will be taking forward or supporting. While it is a national plan, the activity it contains has been informed primarily by local and school-level priorities drawn from the regional improvement and recovery plans produced by the six RICs, as well as the 32 local authority 2020/21 improvement and recovery plans, which in turn have all been informed by improvement planning at individual school level. The national plan is, therefore, a summation of what schools across Scotland have told us they want to focus on, informed by local consultation and evidence. The Plan has also been informed by the data in the NIF Interactive Evidence Report, evidence from school inspections and local authority self-evaluation reports, and recommendations and advice from the ICEA.

The regional and local authority plans, informed by the school improvement plans, identified a number of common themes, which are picked up later on in the NIF under the relevant drivers of improvement:

School Leadership

- Promote a culture of strong leadership at all levels and in a range of contexts, where educators are empowered to lead across a wide range of educational settings.
- Work collaboratively with peers and colleagues to develop a supportive coaching/mentoring approach to leadership within schools.

Teacher Professionalism

- Improve skills, and increase the confidence of teachers in using digital tools to enhance learning, teaching and parental engagement.
- An emphasis on staff health and wellbeing support in light of COVID-19.

Parental Engagement

- Ensure that every parent and family is supported to be involved and engaged in their child's education throughout their learning journey.
- Families should have increased confidence in supporting their child in literacy and numeracy.

Assessment of children's progress

- Assessment should take into account the need to establish children's next steps in learning across the curriculum, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Continue to embed a self-improving system to improve outcomes for learners and raise attainment and achievement through improved learning, teaching and assessment.

School Improvement

- All school leavers should be well-supported and move into positive and sustained destinations.
- Support schools and settings to harness the potential of digital technologies to enhance learning, teaching and assessment.
- Support schools to implement recovery planning and to reengage with the cycle of school improvement when appropriate.

Performance information

- It is everyone's responsibility to gather and use performance information to intervene to secure improvement for all children and young people.

A curriculum that provides the skills and attributes needed in a rapidly changing world

In 2018 the ICEA endorsed Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) as "the cornerstone of educational transformation in Scotland" but recommended a renewed focus on the four capacities of CfE²: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors.

The purpose of Scotland's curriculum is to provide young people with the skills, knowledge and experiences that will prepare them for their life beyond school and provide them with the best possible opportunity to fulfil their potential. Curriculum for Excellence, its four capacities, its principles and its values are therefore the central foundation for high quality learning, teaching, and assessment. It is essential that the curriculum supports our children and young people to develop fully in school, to achieve positive destinations and to be provided with the full range of skills, attributes and capacities to be resilient within a rapidly changing world.

A range of indicators demonstrate important strengths within the curriculum:

School leaver data

- 92.9% of 2018/19 school leavers were in work, training or study within nine months of leaving school, down from a record 93.3% in 2017/18;
- the proportion of 2018/19 school leavers unemployed nine months after leaving school was 5.8%, down from 13.1% in 2009/10;
- the gap between those from the most and least deprived communities within nine months of leaving school in work, education or training – a positive destination – has reduced from 18.7 percentage points in 2009/10 to 8.4 percentage points in 2018/19; and
- 38.4% of school leavers in 2018/19 were in Higher Education nine months after leaving school.
- the number of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at Level 5 and above increased from 7.3% in 2013/14 to 17.1% in 2018/19;
- the percentage of school leavers attaining one or more passes at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) or better is up from 50.4% in 2009/10 to 60.5% in 2018/19; and
- the percentage of school leavers attaining one or more passes at SCQF Level 5 (National 5) or better is up from 77.1% in 2009/10 to 85.1% in 2018/19.

This information demonstrates that young people are being provided with a wider range of options and pathways. Schools are being provided with the opportunity to be flexible and to tailor their curriculum to the needs of every single young person no matter their background, interest, confidence or future career aspirations.

OECD Review of Curriculum for Excellence

The Scottish Government has commissioned the OECD to undertake an Independent review of Curriculum for Excellence. The original [remit](#) for the review was published in February 2020.

² International Council of Education Advisers: report 2016-2018 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/international-council-education-advisers-report-2016-18/>

It sets out the priorities for the Review as:

- Curriculum design
- Depth and Breadth of learning in the Senior Phase
- Local flexibility versus increased prescription
- The transition from the Broad General Education into Senior Phase
- Vocational and academic learning and awards
- Roles and responsibilities in relation to the curriculum

The Review will look at the Senior Phase curriculum and the Broad General Education and the articulation between the two. It will help us to better understand the choices young people are getting across the country.

Additional work on assessment and qualifications

In response to the 2020 SQA exam results, the Deputy First Minister asked the OECD to expand the work on the CfE Review to also include a deeper focus on the future of student assessment and qualifications approaches in the Senior Phase curriculum in Scotland. The aim of this work is to analyse Scotland's approach to student assessment and qualifications and produce options for how we could enhance our approach, informed by international good practice.

This work will be aligned with the current OECD Review of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and the final comparative paper will be published later in the summer 2021, following the publication of the CfE Review Report in June 2021.

Key milestones for the Review:

- Visit 1: National Stakeholders - 28 September - 2 October 2020
- Visit 2: Schools, practitioners and learners - 2-5 November 2020
- Visit 3: Engagement on preliminary findings – late February/ early March 2021
- Publication of final report - June 2021
- Publication of comparative paper – Summer 2021

Measuring the attainment gap

Closing the poverty related attainment gap remains a top priority for this Government - we want every child to have a fair chance in life, and we know that a good education is the foundation of that.

In the 2018 NIF and Improvement Plan, we set out our approach to measuring the poverty related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities. We identified 11 key measures 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.

As set out in more detail below, we do not have complete data for 5 of the 11 key measures. This is primarily because we could not collect comparable ACEL data this year due to the pandemic. In addition, there has been a change to the domains assessed for the 27-30 month review, which means that the stretch aim that was set for that measure is no longer appropriate.

The gap between those living in the most or least deprived areas in relation to the percentage of children having no concerns identified at their 27-30 month review has remained constant, as has that for the percentage of children and young people aged 4-12 years, and 13 and 15 year olds, in their total difficulties score.

We are also using [stretch aims](#) for each of the 11 key measures to assist the Scottish Government, local authorities and schools to develop and implement the most appropriate improvement activities to secure educational improvement for all children and young people in Scotland. The stretch aims are deliberately designed to be a challenging ambition to which those who are delivering improvement can aspire. They are not targets. At the moment, although some progress is being made, none of the measures which are showing a narrowing, are narrowing to the extent set by the stretch aims.

More detail on what the data is telling us is provided below under each measure. In aggregate, however, it serves to re-emphasise the need to intensify, deepen and accelerate progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap, in line with the priority placed on it by the Scottish Government.

27-30 month review (children showing no concerns across all domains)

In 2016/17, there was a change to the domains assessed by health visitors at a child's 27-30 month review.

Between April 2013 and March 2017, health visitors assessed children across nine domains at their review (speech, language and communication; attention; fine motor; gross motor; social; emotional; behavioural; vision; and hearing). Since April 2017, these nine domains became eight new domains (speech, language and communication; gross motor; fine motor; personal/social; emotional/behavioural; vision; hearing; and problem solving).

This change has had an impact on the statistics produced for this key measure since 2017/18, largely due to the fact that not all Health Boards are currently assessing the new problem solving domain that was introduced in April 2017. As a result of this, the statistics produced for this key measure since 2017/18 are much lower than in pre-2017/18, because it is now not known if a child actually has no concerns across all of the current eight

developmental domains (because if one or more domain is not assessed then we do not know if this is indeed the case.)

There does appear to have been an improvement between 2017/18 and 2018/19 in the percentage of children aged 27-30 months who had no concerns identified across all eight domains. However, even with the change in the number and type of domains assessed at these child health reviews, the gap between children living in the most and least deprived areas of Scotland has remained fairly constant at around 16 percentage points since 2015/16 (apart from in 2017/18 where there was a 19 percentage point gap).

HWB:Children total difficulties score (age 4-12)

The gap between children in the most deprived and least deprived areas has remained the same between 2012-15 and 2016-19, at 16 percentage points.

HWB:Children total difficulties score (age 13&15)

The gap between children in the most deprived and least deprived areas has remained the same between 2015 and 2018, at 8 percentage points.

This means that we have not seen demonstrable progress against the stretch aims for either of these measures.

Primary - Literacy (P1, P4, P7 combined)

Secondary - Literacy (S3, 3rd level or better)

Primary - Numeracy (P1, P4, P7 combined)

Secondary - Numeracy (S3, 3rd level or better)

As a result of COVID-19 and the closure of schools in March 2020, the Scottish Government decided that it would not be appropriate for the collection of Achievement of CfE level (ACEL) data for 2019/20 to go ahead. The data for these four measures, therefore, has not changed since 2018/19. However, in the period up to 2018/19, the data shows that the gap between the proportion of primary pupils from the most and least deprived areas, who achieved their expected level in literacy, has reduced since 2016/17. The gap between the proportion of primary pupils from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in numeracy reduced slightly between 2016/17 and 2017/18, and has remained stable between 2017/18 and 2018/19. The picture is slightly different at S3, where the gap between the proportion of pupils from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in literacy reduced slightly between 2016/17 and 2017/18, but then increased slightly between 2017/18 and 2018/19. There has also been a narrowing of the gap between the most and least deprived areas for pupils in S3 who achieved their expected level in numeracy since 2016/17.

SCQF Levels 4, 5 and 6 (1 or more on leaving school)

The current gap, based on school leaver attainment between 2015/16 and 2018/19 shows an increase in the gap for pupils leaving school with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 4 (due to a slightly lower percentage of pupils leaving school from the most deprived areas with at least one qualification at this level).

Over the same time period, there has been little change in the percentage of pupils from the most and least deprived areas leaving school with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 5. As such, the gap has remained virtually the same.

Finally, for pupils who left school with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 6, the gap has narrowed between 2015/16 and 2018/19, from 38.5 percentage points to 35.8 percentage points. This narrowing of the gap is in part due to an increase in the percentage of pupils leaving school with at least one qualification at this level from the most deprived areas over this time period, but also due to a fall in the percentage of pupils leaving school with at least one qualification at this level from the least deprived areas.

This means that, for these 3 measures combined, the gap is not closing as quickly as set out in the stretch aims.

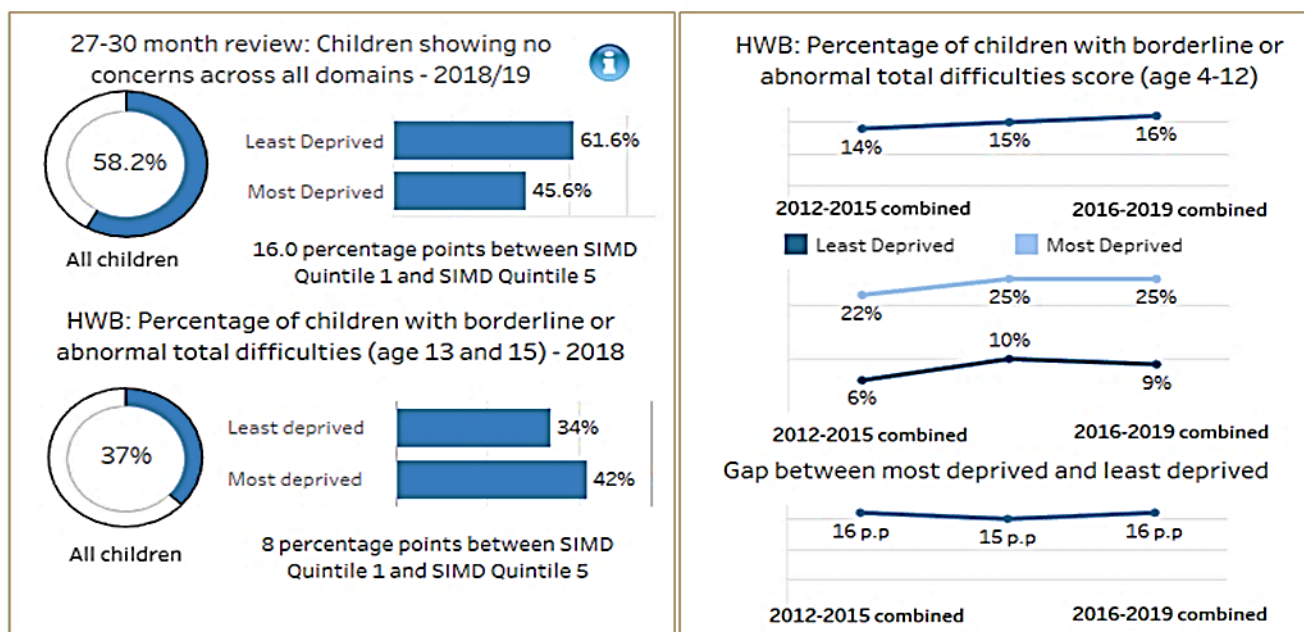
Participation measure

The participation measure shows that the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment has been improving since 2017. The gap between the proportion of 16-19 year olds in the most deprived areas participating in education, training, and employment compared with those in the least deprived areas has narrowed from 11.5 percentage points to 9.9 percentage points.

This narrowing of the gap is due to the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment increasing more for those in the most deprived areas than for those in the least deprived areas. Although clear improvements have been made, the gap is not closing as quickly as set out in the stretch aim.

Summary tables of the key measures are set out below, while the 15 sub-measures can be seen in the [NIF Interactive Evidence Report](#).

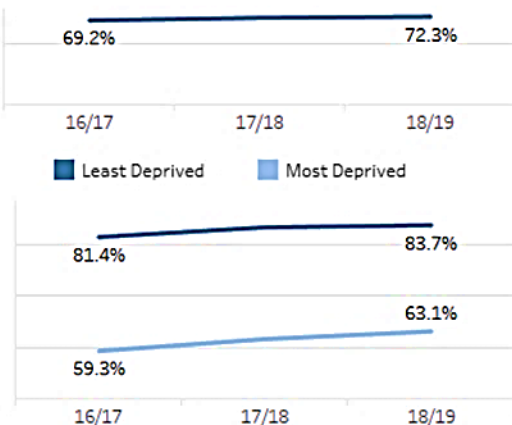
Executive Summary: Early years, health and wellbeing



For the 27-30 month review, only data for 2018/19 is shown in the above chart.

Executive Summary: Broad General Education

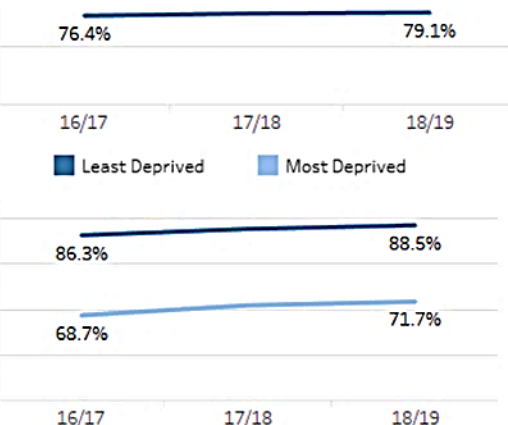
Percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level in literacy (P1, P4, P7 combined)



Gap between most deprived and least deprived



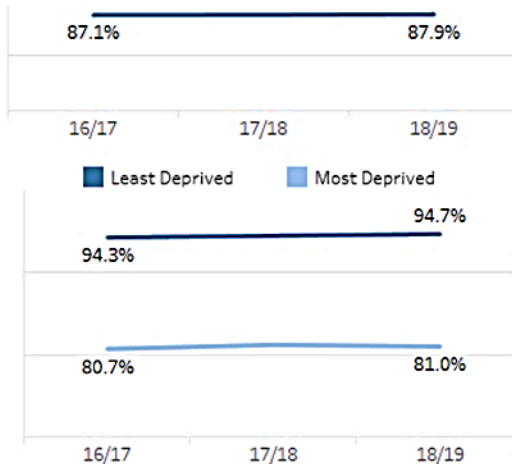
Percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level in numeracy (P1, P4, P7 combined)



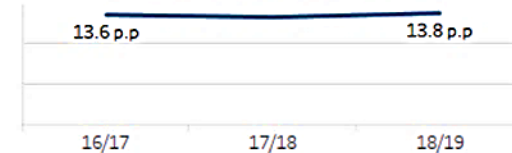
Gap between most deprived and least deprived



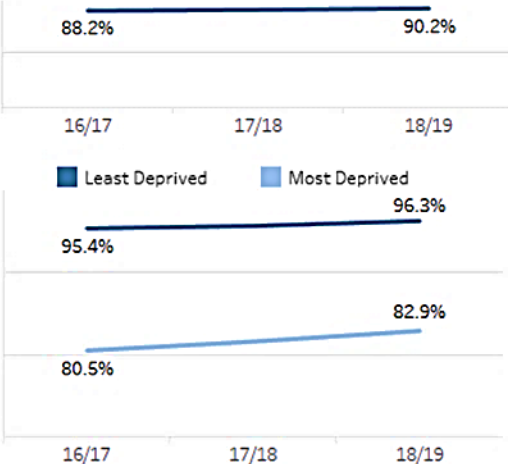
Percentage of pupils in S3 achieving CfE 3rd level or better in literacy



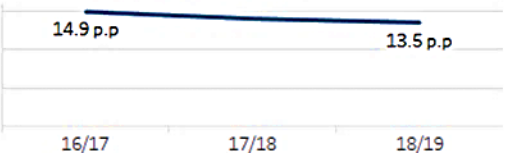
Gap between most deprived and least deprived



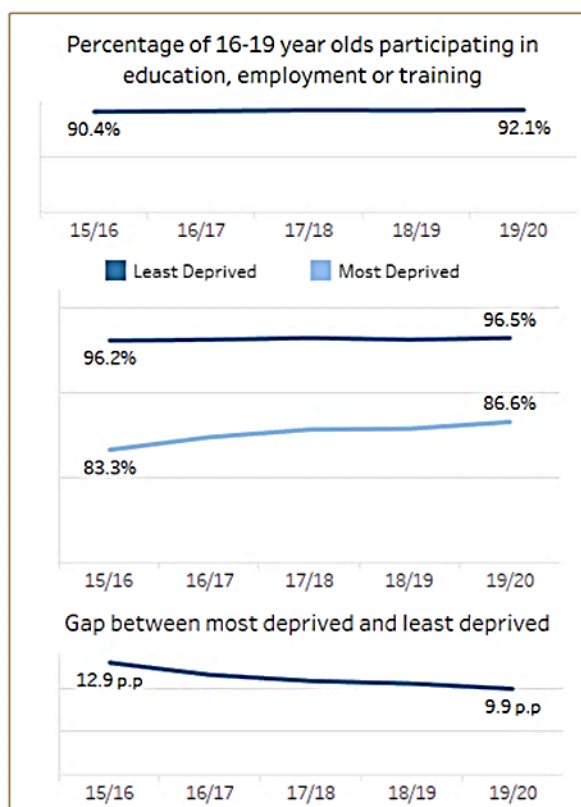
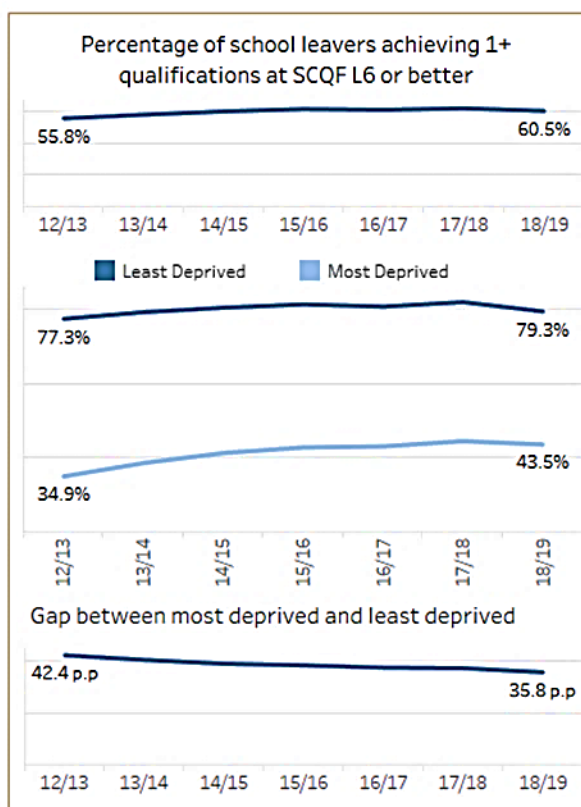
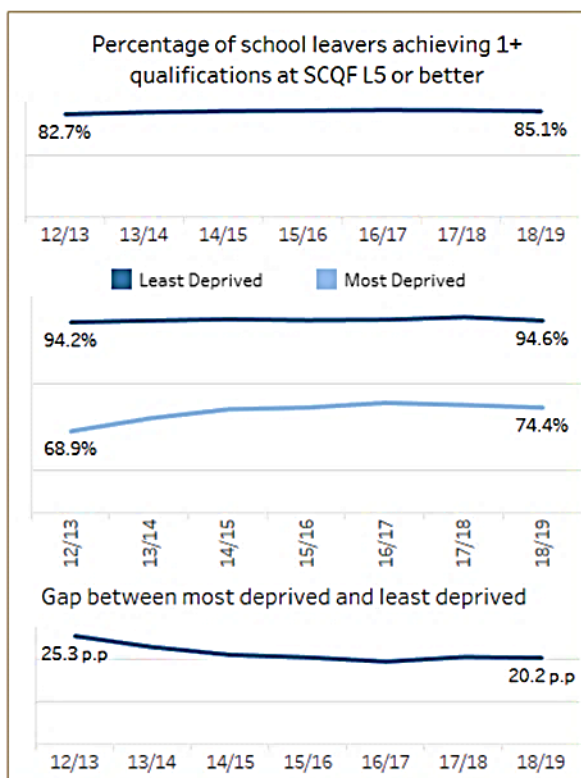
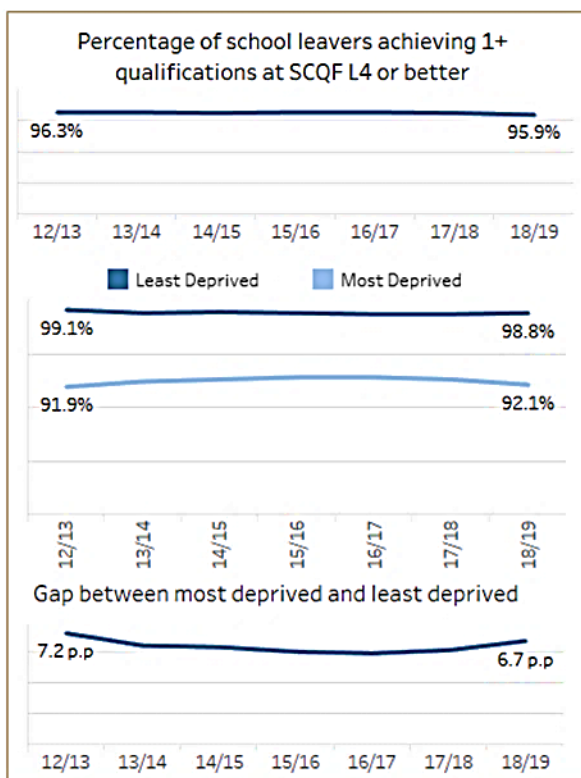
Percentage of pupils in S3 achieving CfE 3rd level or better in numeracy



Gap between most deprived and least deprived



Executive Summary: Senior Phase and Participation Measure



Next steps on closing the attainment gap

A number of steps have been taken as part of the response to COVID-19 and in support of our ambition of closing the gap. While not comprehensive, these include:

- An increased **support for families to engage with learning at home**, including via Glow and a range of new national digital learning resources. Education Scotland has committed to strengthening its close working with e-Sgoil, widening access for learners to live lessons, providing timetabled online classes, and training additional teachers to provide online learning as part of a wider e-Learning National Offer.
- **£80 million of additional investment in education staff**, sufficient for the recruitment of around 1,400 additional teachers and 200 support staff. It is anticipated that these additional teachers will intensify support for individuals or groups of pupils who have significant gaps in their progress as a result of lockdown, supporting young people who are shielding, supporting small groups of learners who need more intense support and covering classes for teachers who are shielding.
- The provision of **flexibility to redirect Attainment Scotland Funding** to help mitigate the impacts of school closures on our most disadvantaged families, and to make adjustments to existing plans to be delivered as schools return.
- For the first time, **Pupil Equity Fund allocations were confirmed for two years** (totalling £250 million over 2020/21 and 2021/22), benefitting 97% of schools and giving headteachers assistance in their planning and decision making. As well as taking total investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to over £750 million over the last five years, this also extends the programme for a further year beyond this Parliamentary term and provides invaluable long-term commitment.
- A further £10 million has been made available so councils can **continue providing free school meals through the winter breaks** with future funding confirmed to extend support over Easter. The policy of providing free school meals to the 168,000 pupils in primaries 1 to 3 continues to save families an average of £400 per child, per year.
- The experience of lockdown shows that access to technology and digital capability is, and will remain, a fundamental aspect of education in Scotland. Despite pupils now being physically back at school, we are still committed to tackling digital exclusion. We are investing £30 million as part of a huge digital boost through provision of laptops for disadvantaged children and young people, which includes **£25 million to enable a rollout of digital devices to school pupils to enable them to study online**.

In addition to these, guidance has been produced by the CERG to **support teachers and other professional practitioners in preparing the curriculum offer for the recovery phase**, with an emphasis on prioritising the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, practitioners and families. The CERG will continue to review and update key guidance for schools, including guidance on ensuring continuity in learning and on the curriculum during the recovery period.

Our experience during COVID-19 school closures also reinforced the vital role played by community learning and development in supporting young people and families - a role that will become ever more important in our recovery year. As part of our support to the sector we have provided **£3 million to a new Youth Work for Education Recovery Fund**, supporting young people to engage with youth work activities that build their confidence and skills, support their health and well-being, and address the poverty-related attainment gap.

We know that many children and young people will have had interrupted learning during the course of 2020, and that this impact is likely to be felt disproportionately by children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As we progress with accelerating and intensifying support for learning, it is essential that we do so based upon a rigorous evidence base. The forthcoming Equity Audit – developed through a rapid evidence review plus a deep dive in 54 schools, including engagement with headteachers, practitioners and support staff, parents and young people - will deepen our understanding of the impact on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as improve our awareness of the key drivers behind this and local insight on:

- health and wellbeing
- educational experiences
- educational attainment
- factors which mitigate against negative impacts

Emerging themes from that Equity Audit include:

- Most stakeholders identified that both the mental and physical health and wellbeing of pupils had been negatively impacted during school building closure.
- Of particular importance to children and young people, was the loss of face-to-face teaching and the inability to socialise with friends.
- Children in the early years of primary, or those starting secondary, were most likely to have seen a negative impact on their progress.
- Literacy was more often cited as being affected negatively than numeracy.
- Children for whom English was an additional language often had to revisit skills they had developed prior to the school closure, in both their mother tongue and in English.
- Schools which were already using online platforms were better placed to move to online learning and teaching.
- Pupil motivation and engagement were strongest where there was consultation and choice about learning tasks.
- Engagement with, and feedback from, teachers was noted by many parents and pupils as an important factor in supporting continued learner engagement.
- Collaboration with partners and other agencies enabled schools to better identify vulnerable families and put in place tailored support.
- During and after school building closure, schools reported food insecurity as an emerging issue.
- In a few cases, pupils reported they had found it easier to learn in a remote setting, particularly where they already had good digital skills and parental support.
- All stakeholder groups were able to highlight measures their school, local authority or partner organisations had put in place to mitigate the impact of school building closures.

It is clear from this that an ongoing and long term focus is required to help further close the attainment gap, and to address the impact the pandemic has had on some of the most vulnerable children and families.

As committed to in the Programme for Government we will also publish further evidence of progress made to date by March 2021, including analysis of the learning from the first five years of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. This will include a detailed review by Education Scotland of the practicalities of the Attainment Challenge at local authority level.

Drawing upon this suite of evidence, the Scottish Government will work with partners, including our International Council of Education Advisors, to design the best approach to accelerating progress. A key component of this will be through the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

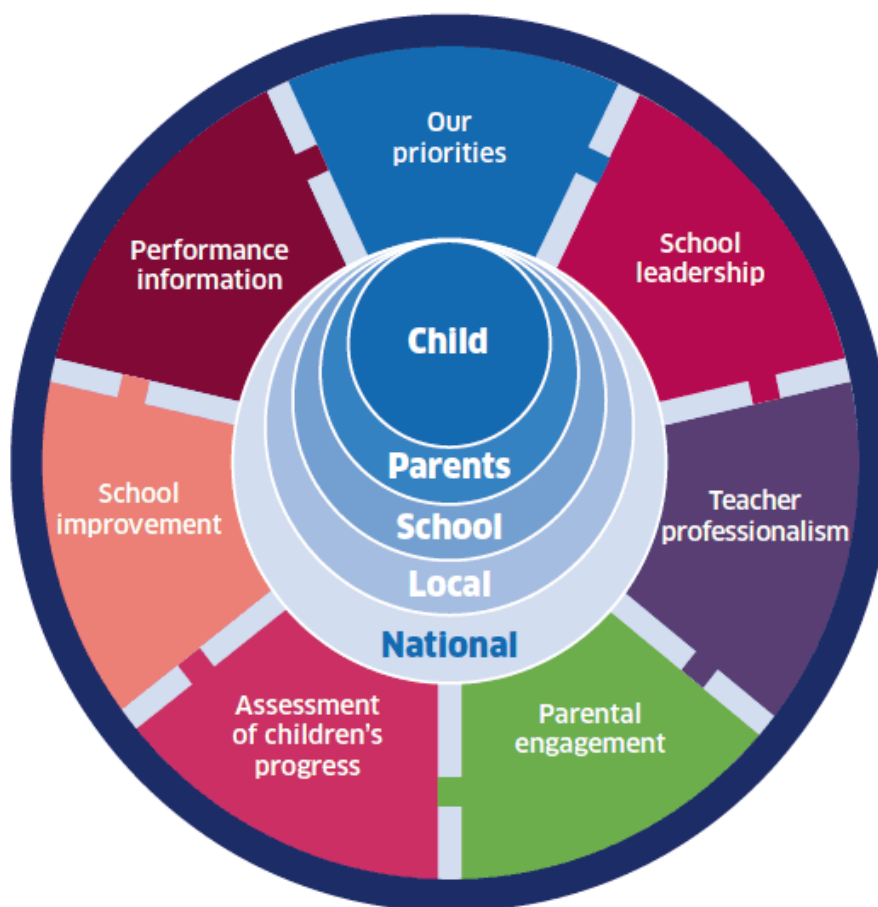
The ICEA has said in its report that, even as Scotland works through the immediate changes brought about as a response to the pandemic, it should keep an eye on the future. The Report suggests that with thoughtful planning and management, the destructive effects of COVID-19 may be converted to positive developments within Scottish education in the longer term. Building on its foundational belief in equity and excellence, there is every chance that Scottish education can be a global standard bearer of education in a post-pandemic world.

Drivers of improvement: what the evidence is telling us and the action we will take

The key drivers of improvement will continue to provide a focus and structure for gathering evidence to identify where further improvements can be made and for ensuring we have the evidence sources to contribute to our priorities, and to minimise unintended consequences. They all remain equally important and the links and connections across these key areas are essential to enable continuous improvement.

The following sections set out the new improvement and recovery activity which is being undertaken under each of these drivers, and a case study to provide an example of what is working well.

A summary of ongoing and completed activity from last year's plan is set out at **Annex A**.



School leadership



What is this?

The quality and impact of leadership within schools – at all levels and roles.

What is the evidence telling us?

Local authorities reported that across Scotland the quality of leadership of change was self-evaluated as good or better in **79%** of schools across primary, secondary and special provision. This has increased from 76% in 2018/19.

Due to COVID-19, school inspections for 2019/2020 were paused on 13 March 2020. Of the 91 schools across primary, secondary and special provision inspected as part of the sample for the NIF between August 2019 and March 2020, 88 schools were evaluated as satisfactory or better (97%). 55 were evaluated as good, very good or excellent on 'leadership of change' (60%).

Since this data was first collected in August 2017, 334 schools across primary, secondary and special provision have been inspected on 'leadership of change' for the National Improvement Framework. In that time, 61% of them were evaluated as good, very good or excellent (and 90% as satisfactory or better).

HM Inspectors found in 2019/20 that in most schools, collaborative leadership has an appropriate focus on equity and raising attainment for all. Senior leadership teams promote collegiate working among staff. In secondary schools, the majority of middle leaders manage change well. They work collaboratively with each other and their teams. There remains scope to ensure that strategies are used more effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of change, including measuring fully the impact of interventions on individuals and groups of learners

Staff show ongoing commitment to and engagement in professional learning to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Increasingly, professional learning is aligned with improvement priorities. This is helping staff continually improve their practice and is contributing to positive outcomes for children and young people.

So far 511 teachers across cohorts 1-4 have completed the Into Headship programme. Cohort 5 and 6 are still underway. Cohort 5 has 174 participants on the programme and should be completing now. There are 244 participants on cohort 6 and they are due to complete Dec 2021- Jan 2022. The Into Headship programme is currently being evaluated in preparation for the forthcoming re-accreditation process with the GTCS (scheduled for March 2021).

Currently, Scotland's teaching population is not reflective of Scotland's population. The statistical data illustrates a static position on the number of teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds and has shown very little change in nearly two decades. Scotland's Census 2011 recorded that the percentage of people in Scotland from minority ethnic groups is 4% and this compares to 2% of the teacher workforce reporting as being from a minority ethnic background in the 2020 Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland publication.

Evidence from survey data from CERG Workstream 6, Workforce Support highlighted the need to support educators' health and wellbeing through COVID-19 as a key priority.

New improvement and recovery actions for the year ahead.

Evaluations about the Education Scotland Into Headship programme are very positive, and recruitment increased this year to its highest level to date. Holding the Standard has become mandatory from August 2020 and recruitment will open again in January 2021 for cohort 7.

Education Scotland to monitor and evaluate the participation in and the impact on school leaders from the Education Scotland professional learning and leadership online offers including: Headspace, Headteacher Blethers, International Blether series, Excellence in Headship (EiH) Learn and Stretch sessions.

[Teaching in a Diverse Scotland](#) identified that more needed to be done to encourage and support leadership opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic educators and to provide current and future school leaders with professional learning focused on anti-racist practice. As a result, Education Scotland will:

- Include case studies on BME teachers who have participated in the professional learning and leadership programmes, in evaluation activity and promotional materials.
- Revise online modules for Into Headship: Education Law and Employment Law.
- Deliver EiH Learn sessions for headteachers focused on diversity in the teaching profession and the role of headteacher offered across the country.
- Work with partners to offer a range of opportunities to explore anti-racist practice and education across a range of programmes.
- Maintain an ongoing revision of programme materials (PPTS, handouts) to ensure that visuals/ examples are more representative of the teaching profession.
- Engage with BME educator networks to share messages about recruitment to programmes and the wider professional learning offer.

Working with key partners, Education Scotland will pilot and evaluate offers to support reflective supervision for educators. This reflective supervision offer is to support the mental wellbeing of staff who provide regular, close support to children, young people and families who themselves have experienced, or are experiencing their own significant distress and/or trauma.

Education Scotland will hold a series of International Leadership Seminars during 2021 which will enable wider engagement across the system including with practitioners, school leaders and system leaders.

School leadership - case study

Fiona McDougall is a Quality Improvement Manager in the South West Educational Improvement Collaborative and has completed Education Scotland's Evolving Systems Thinking programme.



The South West Educational Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) has engaged with the Professional Learning and Leadership (PLL) team at Education Scotland in a variety of ways. Many of the school and system leaders taking on lead roles in the RIC have participated in PLL leadership programmes such as Evolving Systems Thinking, Leading Systems Change and Excellence in Headship. The PLL team at Education

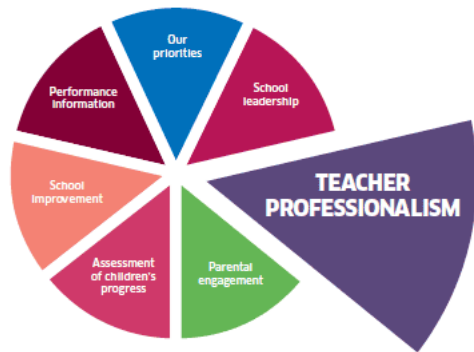
Scotland and the SWEIC work together with a shared expertise to support this work.

As a result of social distancing measures during the pandemic, all professional learning opportunities are now facilitated online. There has been significant engagement from school and system leaders in the Education Scotland online offers (Big Blethers, Wee Blethers and Headspace sessions). Building on this work, SWEIC used this model to deliver a regional blether, led by Douglas Hutchison, SWEIC Regional Lead Officer, SWEIC headteachers from each authority, and Fiona McDougall from the SWEIC team. The blether was supported by Lead Specialists from the PLL team at Education Scotland and the South West Regional Improvement Team senior officers. Lead Specialists supported the event, by sharing learning facilitation and the use of protocols when delivering professional learning online. Feedback has been very positive with participants welcoming the opportunity to share challenges being faced and collectively identify solutions.

Douglas Hutchison commented that “facilitating peer to peer collaboration online allows colleagues to engage with each other in ways which suit them best at this time of great uncertainty. The Blethers create space and time for leaders to come together, share their experiences and bring about new ways of thinking, acting and being.”

Further to this work, the SWEIC has facilitated a range of professional learning opportunities, from larger regional opportunities to more specific work stream related sessions. The SWEIC team collaborated with colleagues from Columba 1400 to deliver a leadership opportunity, entitled ‘Inspiration, Collaboration, Empowerment’, to more than 80 headteachers and has also facilitated regional events for headteachers of rural schools, additional support needs schools and early years leaders.

Teacher professionalism



What is this?

Teacher professionalism demonstrates the overall quality of the teaching workforce in Scotland and the impact of their professional learning on children and young people's progress and achievement.

What is the evidence telling us?

In 2019/20, 600 teachers received Professional Recognition. The most common area was Leading Learning, where teachers gained recognition for their leadership in areas such as improving pedagogy and visible learning. This illustrates the teaching profession's commitment to professional learning and the importance of continuing to recognise and celebrate the effort teachers make to enhance their skills.

The number of local authority teachers who have completed Professional Update sign-off up to 31 October 2020 has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. As of 31 October 2020, 41.3% of the 2018/19 Professional Update cohort had their professional learning confirmed by their line manager. To support teachers within these challenging times, GTC Scotland has extended the final sign-off date from 31 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Data on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) demonstrates a wide variance in time spent on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, equalities and data literacy across universities and programmes.

We need to ensure that our education system has the right number of practitioners, delivering excellent STEM learning and teaching. We need to tackle the gender imbalance and other inequalities and inequities that exist across STEM education and training including in relation to deprivation, race, disability and geography.

The 2019 data collection from local authorities about language learning in schools shows that there is an on-going need for teachers to be supported to delivery language learning, particularly in the primary sector. Scottish Government published detailed results of the survey in March 2020. The 2020 survey is on hold at present and we will consider whether to resume the survey in 2021.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge networking sessions are established and known across the sector, with good participation rates. Evaluations will inform us if the content is relevant and is responsive to the needs of the system.

Due to the pandemic the end of school session 2019/20 was very different for probationer teachers. Education Scotland has designed the 'Stepping Stones' programme to provide a rapid response to that situation with a variety of professional learning opportunities for the target group of teachers in their first 4 years post-probation. The aim is to increase knowledge, skills and confidence in areas identified by participants as requiring development.

We need to monitor the number of new Gaelic Medium Education (GME) teachers going into the profession each year to ensure the numbers are adequate.

New improvement and recovery actions for the year ahead.

To support the new Initial Teacher Education self-evaluation framework, a second self-evaluation symposium will be held in 2021 with ITE providers focused on diversity and health and wellbeing.

As part of the Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) plan, milestone 1b focusses on supporting practitioners to network and share knowledge of what is working well to support the educational recovery of the most disadvantaged children and young people. This will be achieved in collaboration with partner organisations and practitioners to encourage sharing knowledge around the system through a range of approaches including for example, Education Scotland's Blether series.

Education Scotland will put in place a quality assurance process by April 2021 to ensure that all professional learning activities (PLAs) are of a consistent and high standard. Processes will be established and in place to ensure online content is refreshed, PLA material is updated and the impact of implementation is evident. Materials will be developed and utilised. Increased practitioner skill and confidence will be evidenced through course evaluations initially.

To support the mental health and inclusion of vulnerable children and young people (CYP), and their families during the recovery from COVID-19, thereby addressing the achievement gap, Education Scotland will undertake the development of a self-evaluation tool kit for practitioners to support the implementation of GIRFEC for all learners (GIRFL), which will be championed by, and in, RICs to ensure a better balance of mental health. Inclusive teaching and learning offers and the rights of CYP will be incorporated into all of Education Scotland's activities.

Education Scotland will adapt the Teacher Leadership Programme and Supporting Teacher Leadership Programmes to be delivered exclusively online, with a mixture of online meetings, networking events and self-directed learning modules. This will include the introduction of online twilight workshops with practitioner input into content and themes. Continuation of Blethers to provide professional dialogue and networking opportunities to a wider teacher audience.

Engagement in the Workforce Support package of resources including coaching and mentoring and reflective supervision, including participants' evaluations, will be monitored to ensure the concepts are useful for participants.

Education Scotland will deliver the post probationer package of support 'Stepping Stones: Support for teachers in their early career'. The Stepping Stones programme will include a dedicated space on the Education Scotland Professional Learning resource providing access to a series of workshops, online 'Blethers' and specific PLAs. There will additionally be a Stepping Stones Community on Microsoft teams to allow sharing, networking and collaboration. In this way the programme will provide an element of peer support for teachers for their own wellbeing.

Professional learning and support for languages will be provided through funding for local government for languages 1+2, through Scotland's National Centre for Languages, SCILT, by Education Scotland and through the British Council's Modern Language Assistant Programme.

To promote the recruitment of Gaelic teachers, the Scottish Government is funding a Gaelic Teacher Recruitment Officer at Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG) to attract Gaelic speakers into the profession. A range of promotional materials have been prepared for this purpose and BnG and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) are promoting Gaelic teaching at school events. In addition courses are available at Glasgow University and Sabhal Mor Ostaig to assist teachers who would like to transfer from English to Gaelic teaching and also local authorities are providing support within their area for those who would like to teach through the medium of Gaelic.

Teacher professionalism - case study

Anita Le Tissier is a Principal Teacher at an Edinburgh primary school and a past participant of Education Scotland's Middle Leaders – Leading Change (MLLC) programme.



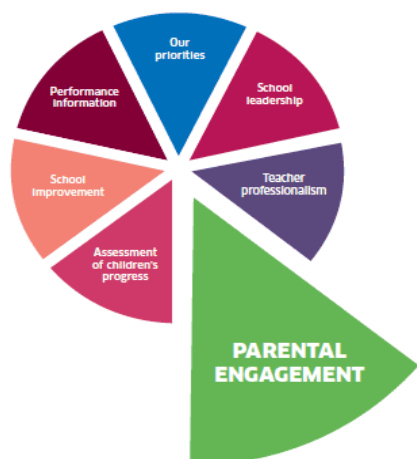
Teacher Professionalism demonstrates the quality of the teaching workforce in Scotland and has been of significance to me throughout my teaching career. Professional development, through collaborative learning, has impacted my practice and career decisions since qualifying. I have engaged significantly with Education Scotland's PLL resources for a number of years. Attendance on the MLLC programme had a profound impact on my own commitment to learning for leadership.

My participation in the MLLC programme offered the first experience of collaborating with colleagues to challenge perspectives, which in turn, opened the door to further learning of leadership. I then engaged in reading more around leadership of change, and values-based leadership. My learning here felt cathartic as I grew in my understanding of myself as a person, and as a professional. Since attending the course, I have become passionate about developing professional identity – encouraging the people I work with to engage in their own critical reflection to understand and enact who they are and how that benefits all children.

When schools closed in 2020 due to COVID-19, I felt very soon after that part of my identity had faded – the professional part of me who thrived on leadership of learning and learning for leadership. Along with a Twitter friend, I started Scottish Educators Connect (SEC) – an online book group aimed at collaborative professional development. The group, originally nine members has been active for seven months. We have over 1000 Twitter followers, have undertaken book studies with more than 100 Scottish educators and health professionals, have a website with over 20,000 views and a podcast with hundreds of weekly listeners and a total of 6,000 listens since July. The impact of the reach of Scottish Educators Connect is the positive engagement of all participants in self-criticality and reflections for positive change in schools.

The creation and continuation of SEC supports the Scottish teaching workforce to improve in their professionalism by facilitating participants to challenge their bias, perspectives and ideas and learn from each other. The collaborative community keeps growing and we welcome all professionals who support children and young people, in all sectors of education and health.

Parental engagement



What is this?

This covers parental and family engagement in the learning of children and young people, as well as parental involvement in the life and work of school. Parental engagement focuses on ways in which parents, carers and families can best be supported to develop the skills and confidence to engage in, and encourage, their children's learning in school and in everyday life. Schools and partners can play a vital role in supporting families to do this effectively and with confidence.

What is the evidence telling us?

Before school inspections take place, HM Inspectors issue questionnaires to parents and carers. These give an indication of the satisfaction of parents and carers with various aspects of the school to inform the inspection. The results from these questionnaires for the academic year 2019/20 are provided below. These questionnaire data relate to the 91 establishments inspected as part of the sample for the National Improvement Framework between August 2019 and March³ 2020. These results are not representative of all parents/carers across Scotland.

7,213 parents/carers of pupils in primary, secondary, all-through and special schools completed the questionnaire.⁴

When asked about satisfaction with their engagement and involvement with the school:

- **74%** agreed⁵ that the school gave them advice on how to support their child's learning at home.
- **57%** agreed that the school organised activities where they and their child could learn together.
- **59%** agreed that the school took their views into account when making changes.
- **86%** agreed that they felt comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions and/or a problem.
- **78%** agreed that they were kept informed about the work of the Parent Council and/or parent association.
- **75%** agreed that they felt encouraged to be involved in the work of the Parent Council and/or parent association.
- **81%** agreed that they would recommend the school to other parents.
- **84%** agreed that they were satisfied with the school.

³ Inspections were paused on 9th March 2020 due to Covid-19. As a result, this report only contains results from a partial academic year. 91 out of the planned 120 NIF inspections took place.

⁴ It should be noted that this report contains results from establishments which received pre-inspection questionnaires but where the inspection was subsequently cancelled due to Covid-19.

⁵ 'Agreed' combines the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' response options from the questionnaire.

When asked about satisfaction with their child's progress with learning and the quality of reporting about their progress:

- **81%** agreed that their child found their learning activities hard enough.
- **88%** agreed that their child was making good progress at school.
- **78%** agreed that they received helpful, regular feedback about how their child was doing e.g. informal feedback, reports, learning profiles.
- **76%** agreed that the information they received about how their child is doing reached them at the right time.
- **75%** agreed that they understood how their child's progress was assessed.
- **83%** agreed that their child received the help they need to do well

The key learning points from the initial Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) census data from 2018/19 were as follows:

- Generally, parents of primary school children reported more positive parental involvement and engagement compared to parents of secondary school children.
- There is a need to improve the communication from Parent Councils to Parent Forums but there was a positive view of the impact of Parent Councils in decision making in both primary and secondary.
- Schools are generally very good at being approachable, responding to issues and telling parents about things.
- There is further room for improvement in involving parents in decisions and strategies from the outset.

Awareness and delivery of practice in relation to learning at home, parental involvement/engagement and family learning has increased. However COVID-19 has resulted in a change in engagement strategies and delivery approaches. Practitioners require support and guidance to navigate the new requirements placed on them.

Practitioners require guidance on reporting to parents, holding parent meetings/evenings and engaging with Parent Councils during COVID-19 and the recovery phase.

Parental Engagement / Family Learning practitioner networks are well established and known across the sectors with high participation rates. They value opportunities to share practice and collaborate through relevant online platforms which will support children and families during COVID-19 and the recovery phase.

There is an identified need to upskill Newly Qualified Teachers/Probationers in relation to parental involvement/engagement, family learning and learning at home.

New improvement and recovery actions for the year ahead.

Scottish Government will engage with the National Parental Engagement Steering Group in order to reflect on parental involvement and engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will include a reflection on the experience of virtual parent consultations and Parent Council meetings with a view to informing any future guidance and advice to schools. Practice examples will be shared with the national parental engagement network and via Education Scotland's regional improvement support.

The 2020/21 Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census is being undertaken on a 'volunteer' basis, reflecting the ongoing COVID-related issues which may impact on schools' capacity to undertake the PIE Census in 2020/21. Fieldwork for this PIE Census is planned to take place between January and March 2021.

Scottish Government will monitor and share with partners, the quantitative and qualitative evidence from COVID-19 survey work by parental organisations during the course of 2020/21. This will include but may not be limited to:

- Survey work by National Parent Forum of Scotland in relation to [learning at home during Covid-19](#), parent views on [national qualifications](#) during 2020/21 and other education themes.
- Survey work by Connect – example: [Parent/Carer Back at School Survey Report \(Nov 2020\)](#)

The work to share this information will help to inform the ongoing development of policy and practice on parental engagement and decisions and considerations of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group and wider forums.

Scottish Government and Education Scotland will publicise relevant [guidance and advice on parental involvement during Covid-19](#) to schools via key communication channels and via the national parental engagement network.

Education Scotland will develop and deliver a series of Creative Conversations / Wee Blethers / Webinars in collaboration with schools, local authorities, partner and stakeholder groups as appropriate.

Education Scotland will update [National Improvement Hub](#), wakelets (content curation platforms) and relevant practitioner online platforms with the most up-to-date and relevant information and resources in collaboration with relevant partners including the research community.

Education Scotland will work with national and international practitioners, researchers, policy makers to provide opportunities for knowledge exchange.

Education Scotland will develop and deliver a series of workshops for Newly Qualified Teachers/Probationers.

Education Scotland will continue to refresh the content of [Parentzone Scotland](#) website during 2021.

Parental engagement - case study

Moorfoot Primary School and Garvel Deaf Centre – Inverclyde Council

Over the last few years, all children have been taught British Sign Language (BSL) from the start of their nursery placement through to Primary 7, with a view to improving communications and relationships amongst all pupils. As children shared their learning about BSL at home with their parents and families, they too were interested in learning more about deaf culture.

Arrangements were put in place for adults to learn BSL free of charge at sessions run by a BSL tutor and supported by parents of deaf pupils from Garvel Deaf Centre. Outreach classes are held in a community setting for any parents or families who are unable to travel to the school.

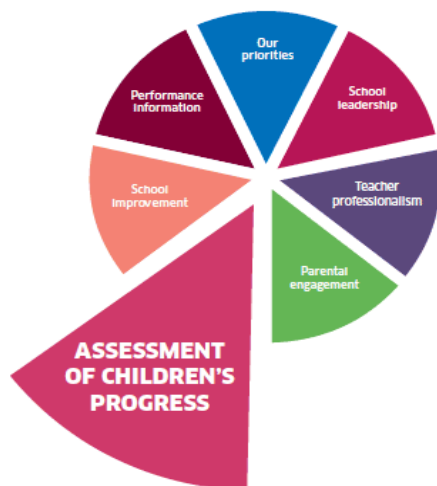
BSL has been incorporated and is celebrated across the school including at assemblies, concerts and the school blog.

This has resulted in:

- Increased parental engagement in children's learning amongst hearing and deaf parents and their families
- Parents feel listened to and involved in the wider life of the school and community
- Greater access to deaf adults, deaf peers and deaf role models both in school and across Scotland
- Improved relationships between children and parents, and reduced frustration and anxiety at home
- Greater deaf awareness and a shared understanding amongst hearing parents, families and pupils
- Improved communications with hearing parents of deaf children, deaf parents of hearing children and deaf parents of deaf children
- Parents are regularly accessing and engaging with the online workshops on the school's learning blog
- Improved relationships and friendships between hearing and deaf children
- Improved children's experiences of school and learning.
- Increased appetite amongst pupils to learn about different cultures and how to sign in other languages
- Closer working with cluster secondary school
- Greater links with the wider community and partnerships with national deaf organisations
- Parents having continued their learning and progressed to qualifications in BSL
- Parents of hearing children using BSL as part of their job to communicate with members of the community

Further information on the work of Moorfoot Primary School and Garvel Deaf Centre can be found on the [National Improvement Hub](#).

Assessment of children's progress



What is this?

Assessment of children and young people's progress includes a range of evidence on what children and young people learn and achieve throughout their education and how well this prepares them for life beyond school. This includes achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels, skills, qualifications and other awards, and achievement of positive and sustained destinations. Progress in learning for children and young people with complex additional support needs is evaluated at an individual level, through agreed plans and personalised next steps.

What is the evidence telling us?

HM Inspectors evaluated the impact of the approach to wellbeing, equality and inclusion which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. There is a focus on how positive learners and staff feel and how well they are listened to and how effectively legislative duties are understood and met.

Of the 91 schools across primary, secondary and special provision inspected as part of the sample for the NIF between August 2019 and March 2020, 88 schools were evaluated as satisfactory or better (97%) 65 were evaluated as good, very good or excellent on 'ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion' (71%). Of the 334 schools across primary, secondary and special provision inspected as part of the sample for the NIF between August 2017 and March 2020, 68% of them were evaluated as good, very good or excellent on 'ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion' (and 92% as satisfactory or better).

Supporting and improving children and young people's wellbeing remains a high priority in schools. As a result of positive relationships, learners feel valued, respected and included in their schools. There is a continued focus on developing children's mental wellbeing and emotional resilience. This is having a positive impact on children regulating their behaviour and engaging in their learning. In almost all secondary schools, staff are prioritising the development of positive mental health. There is an increasing focus in identifying and supporting different groups of learners, such as care experienced children and those with protected characteristics. Schools also develop effective partnerships to support children with additional support needs. In most schools, this is helping to upskill staff to meet children's varying needs. There continue to be challenges in accessing specialist support staff for children and families due to the demand on partner services.

There has been an increase in the number of senior phase pupils studying vocational qualifications, at SCQF 5 and above, delivered by colleges. 6,406 senior phase pupils were enrolled in college courses in 2018/19, compared with 5,216 in 2017/18, 4,510 in 2016/17, 3,014 in 2015/16, and 2,393 in 14/15.

There is a need to track the number of learners who are engaging with Learning for Sustainability and therefore gaining a broad range of knowledge, skills and values associated with real world challenges and opportunities. Ensuring learners are accessing a broad range of skills and knowledge is central to learners gaining the four capacities at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence.

Teaching Unions and the third sector all have highlighted in campaigns the importance of providing mental health first aid training for teachers.

The Additional Support for Learning (ASL) review found that ASL is not visible or equally valued within Scotland's education system, although there is no fundamental deficit in the principle and policy intention of the ASL legislation and the substantial guidance accompanying it. The challenge is in translating that intention into practice for all our children and young people who face different barriers to their learning across a range of different home and learning environments.

There is a need to continue to support the moderation of learning, teaching and assessment to support teacher's professional judgements. Due to the current context the way this is delivered needs to reflect this. We will provide a more localised and digital approach. This is part of the People and Place approach.

New improvement and recovery actions for the year ahead.

The Learning for Sustainability (LfS) self-assessment tool provided by the SCQF supports credit rating bodies identify their awards and qualifications as LfS-relevant. The Scottish Government will work with the SCQF to monitor the number of LfS relevant awards as more credit rating bodies periodically review their offerings. This information will allow the Scottish Government to monitor associated enrolment and attainment and ultimately the prevalence of LfS in the senior phase of the curriculum.

The Scottish Government has formed a Gender Based Violence in Schools working group to take forward specific actions to support children and young people in light of the reports. The working group will produce guidance for schools by January 2022.

The Scottish Government has commissioned a contractor to develop a new online mental health professional learning resource for all school staff. The aim of the resource is to provide foundation knowledge to all school staff to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The resource will also provide signposting to specialist services that can support children and young people. This will be available by Spring 2021.

The Scottish Government's Blueprint for 2020 Quality Action Plan identified the need for professional learning modules across a range of topics to support the expansion of high quality Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). These included curriculum rationale and monitoring and tracking. Education Scotland will develop professional learning to support improvement in curriculum rationale and monitoring and tracking in the ELC sector during the recovery phase and beyond.

To support young peoples' progression into positive destinations, national and regional work is taking place in Education Scotland to assess and develop the delivery of work-related and work-based learning e.g. virtual work placement experience for learners in the current context of COVID-19. Collectively, we aim to develop mechanisms to support the delivery of work based learning experiences (e.g. virtual work placements) through e.g. the development of an online support offer.

The review of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL) made recommendations about how to enhance the educational experiences of children and young people with additional support needs. This includes ensuring that the achievements and

successes of children and young people are fully recognised and celebrated. A national measurement framework for additional support for learning (ASL) will be developed by 31 October 2021.

The Scottish Government will monitor progress made against the actions from the ASL Review by 31 October 2021.

The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland's 2018 No Safe Place report, and evidence gathered during the Scottish Government's engagement with local authorities in 2019, highlighted inconsistencies in the definitions of restraint and seclusion used in local policy and practice and the lack of a standard dataset for recording incidents. In 2020, a Physical Intervention Working Group was established to take forward improvements in this area by:

- Developing new national human-rights based guidance on physical intervention, which includes national definitions, by 2021.
- Developing and implementing a new national dataset for the recording and monitoring of incidents.
- Reviewing the restraint and seclusion data collected by local authorities as part of a one year review following publication of the guidance, to assess the guidance's success.

Professor Mark Priestley was commissioned to conduct a review of events following the cancellation of the examination diet in 2020. The review made nine recommendations, the Scottish Government's [response](#) to which is summarised below.

- Cancellation of the National 5 exams in 2021 was announced on 7 October 2020, and the cancellation of Higher and Advanced Higher exams was outlined on 8 December. SQA has set up a National Qualifications 2021 Group including representatives from ADES, the EIS, SLS, SCIS, Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland and NPFS to develop and disseminate subject specific guidance for National 5 courses, and this model will form the basis of the arrangements for Higher and Advanced Higher. SQA has also established a learner panel to inform this group to ensure that learner's voices are heard.
- Scottish Government has asked the OECD to extend the scope of the review of the curriculum to include a desk based comparative analysis looking at different countries' approaches to assessment of school level qualifications; and a session(s) with stakeholders to seek views on their findings and recommendations.
- SQA is developing a Learner Engagement Strategy with a focus on strengthening existing links with young people and organisations representing their interests, including the Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot.
- SQA is setting up a group to consider the qualification appeals process and the implications for it from UNCRC. This work will be overseen by the National Qualifications 2021 Group and will include broader stakeholder engagement.
- The need for independent research into the development and application of the 2020 ACM will be considered as part of the Scottish Government's research strategy.
- SQA to consider the recommendation on the operational processes for gathering candidate evidence for appeals as part of their digital strategy.

Education Scotland will deliver online professional learning to support learning, teaching and assessment, moderation and the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSO) programme to practitioners, schools, local authorities, RICs and nationally during the academic session 2020-21. Support will be provided to all levels of the system (including Gaelic Medium Education.)

Assessment of children's progress - case study

North Berwick High School



The ethos and ambition of the North Berwick High School community is underpinned by the school motto: 'Aim Higher' and it is characterised by very positive relationships between young people and staff, and young people and their peers.

The school values of curiosity, diligence, kindness and belonging, underpin young people's learning experiences across the school.

Young people can talk about how they are demonstrating these values in their learning.

Young people have valuable opportunities to evaluate their own learning in faculties in a variety of ways including, learning conversations, questionnaires and discussion groups.

The results of these findings are used by teachers and senior leaders to inform improvement planning at a whole school and faculty level. Where learning activities are appropriately challenging and enjoyable, and are well matched to their needs and interests, young people are particularly diligent, creative and highly motivated.

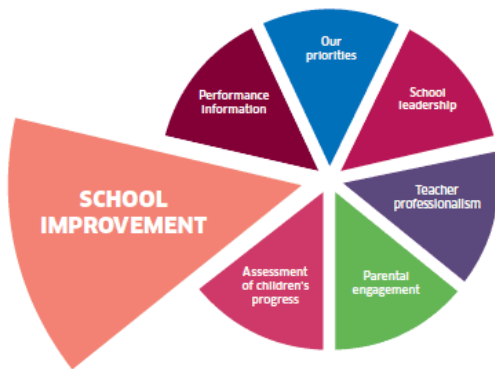
Planning learning to meet the wide range of needs within a classroom is a feature of learning in most lessons but it is particularly well developed in a few faculties. Almost all teachers are using digital technology effectively to share the purpose of learning with learners.

Teachers have engaged in several useful professional learning opportunities to develop their skills in using a range of digital technologies to enhance learners' experiences. They use a variety of digital platforms to provide resources for young people and to give feedback on their work.

Young people value this approach. In a few lessons, digital aids such as visualizers are used to help develop young people's understanding of new ideas. Senior leaders and teachers are now better placed to identify underperformance or any attainment issues in the Broad General Education.

The improved systems are helping staff to target support for young people more effectively. This new approach also enables staff to view performance of young people across their subjects in the school and is helping to raise expectations.

School improvement



What is this?

The overall quality of education provided by each school in Scotland and its effectiveness in driving further improvement.

What is the evidence telling us?

Due to COVID-19 the school inspections for 2019/2020 were paused on 13th March 2020. Of the 91 schools across primary, secondary and

special provision inspected as part of the sample for the NIF between August 2019 and March 2020, 88 were evaluated as satisfactory or better (97%). 56 of them were evaluated as good, very good or excellent on 'learning, teaching and assessment' (62%).

Of the 334 schools across primary, secondary and special provision inspected as part of the sample for the NIF between August 2017 and March 2020, 92% were evaluated as satisfactory or better, and 57% of them were evaluated as good, very good or excellent on 'learning, teaching and assessment'.

The culture arising from positive relationships between teachers and learners, and learners and themselves continues to be a strength. Staff provide learning environments that are stimulating, engaging and support children and young people to engage well in their learning. In primary schools, the development of nurturing approaches and children's rights underpin teaching and learning.

Senior leaders and teachers are continuing to work collegiately to develop approaches to learning and teaching. Achieving consistently high quality learning and teaching across all sectors continues to be an identified priority for improvement. In primary schools, there is an increasing use of creative pedagogies such as play, digital and outdoor learning. These are supporting children to develop skills through collaborative learning. There remains a need to ensure learning and teaching takes place at an appropriate pace and with the right level of challenge to support all learners to continue to achieve well. A few secondary schools are facing challenges accessing subject specialist staffing and this is affecting the overall quality of learning and teaching in particular subject areas.

HM Inspectors also evaluated the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all children and young people. This focused on attainment across all areas of the curriculum and the ability to demonstrate improvements in children and young people's achievements in relation to skills and attributes.

Of the 91 schools across primary, secondary and special provision inspected as part of the sample for the NIF between August 2019 and March 2020, 84 schools were evaluated as satisfactory or better (92%). 62 were evaluated as good, very good or excellent on 'raising attainment and achievement' (68%).

Of the 334 schools across primary, secondary and special provision inspected as part of the sample for the NIF between August 2017 and March 2020, 90% were evaluated as satisfactory or better, and 58% of them were evaluated as good, very good or excellent on 'raising attainment and achievement'.

Overall, schools continue to improve the reliability and validity of their attainment data on CfE levels in literacy and numeracy across the BGE. Teacher judgements are supported well by a range of assessment approaches, including information from Scottish National Standardised Assessments. Most schools ensure a focus on raising attainment for all. There remains scope across sectors for learners to attain more, particularly in writing.

Across primary schools, teachers are more confident using the results of assessment to implement interventions to raise attainment for groups of children. There is scope in secondary schools for teachers to have clearer strategies in place to identify attainment gaps and evaluate how successfully these are being closed. To support young people into more appropriate learning pathways there is an increased focus on college placements, national progression awards and foundation apprenticeships in many schools.

Overall, schools continue to develop well their understanding of the poverty-related attainment gap in their local context. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of their learners, their families and the socio-economic circumstances that they live in. Most schools are developing approaches to ensure potential barriers to learning are minimised to support learners to achieve well. Almost all schools have planned interventions in place using Attainment Scotland Funding, particularly to provide targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Moving forward it is important that schools develop robust procedures to track and monitor the impact of these interventions on raising attainment for targeted groups of learners. There is scope for the impact of partnership working to be evaluated more robustly.

93% was the total attendance rate recorded for 2018/19. This is very similar to previous years. The attendance rate was higher for primary schools (94.5%) than secondary schools (90.7%) and special schools (90.1%). Children and young people living in the 20% most deprived areas had an attendance rate that was 4.9 percentage points lower than the pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas.

Looked after children have a lower attendance rate (86.8%) than all pupils (93.0%), with the difference highest in secondary schools. The exclusion rate for all pupils in 2018/19 was 21.6 per 1,000 pupils. This has been falling year on year since 2006/07. Rates of exclusions per 1,000 pupils for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas were 35.4 per 1,000 pupils compared with 8.2 per 1,000 pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas.

Exclusion rates are around seven times as high among looked after children (152 per 1,000 pupils) compared to all pupils. Rates of exclusion have fallen substantially for looked after pupils, from 397 per 1,000 pupils in 2009/10 to 152 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19.

At 31 December 2019, 90.2% of services providing funded ELC were evaluated as good or better in all quality themes assessed.

With the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scot's law, there is a need to ensure that practitioners in all settings, including CLD, FE, ELC and schools understand how to respect and protect children's rights. A number of sources highlight that children and young people are not experiencing an education where race equality is consistently embedded across the curriculum and Black and minority ethnic history and heritage are not successfully and sensitively delivered through learning. This is underpinned and exacerbated by the significant lack of diversity at all levels in Scotland's teaching workforce and reports of racism and racist bullying which remain unaddressed.

New improvement and recovery actions for the year ahead.

The National e-Learning Offer (NeLO) programme has been set up by the National e-Learning Partnership: Education Scotland, SG, ADES and eSgoil. This offer is initially bringing together the **live** learning option from e-Sgoil, **recorded** content led by the West Partnership and **supported** materials identified by teacher networks and led by Education Scotland. Education Scotland owns overall communications and programme management.

- The existing national technical platforms (e.g. Glow) will be able to support this ongoing delivery. We will draw on the available evidence as we continue to adapt and improve the technical options available for remote learning throughout 2021.
- Schools will be able to use the national e-learning offer to complement and enhance e-learning support available locally and within the local authority and RIC to ensure pupils' education is not interrupted by impacts of the current pandemic.
- Individual teachers will be able to access a wide range of resources to use in their own delivery of e-learning.
- We will develop new e-learning partnerships in response to needs identified via RIC partners.
- Work will progress to establish how schools will be able to use the national e-learning offer after the pandemic.
- Work is underway to ensure schools will be able to use the national e-learning offer after the pandemic to support greater curriculum innovation across the BGE and senior phase. This work will build on the recognition by practitioners, schools, local authorities and learners of the significant potential benefits of e-learning and digital platforms for future improvements to education provision and experiences.

The incorporation of the UNCRC and the experience of children and young people during COVID-19 reinforces the importance of gathering and sharing children and young people's views with decision-makers at every level – school, local and national – and following up to ensure that those views are taken into account. We will take forward a range of further actions to ensure that this is done during 2021.

The [Education Recovery Youth Panel](#) – a follow up to the initial Scottish Learner Panel pilot - will meet between November 2020 and June 2021, supported by Young Scot and Children in Scotland. Views will be gathered from learners aged 9 – 18, every 4-6 weeks via online workshops. Learners' views will be shared via the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group and direct to the Deputy First Minister. Recommendations will be made to the Scottish Government, ensuring that the rights and needs of young people are at the heart of education recovery.

A Member of the [Scottish Youth Parliament](#) has been attending the Education Recovery Group from October 2020, and will continue to do so, representing and sharing the views of young people to the group.

The key findings from survey evidence on the experiences of young people during Covid-19 will be monitored closely and shared with decision-makers, including the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group. This will include but will not be limited to:

- The [Lockdown Lowdown](#) survey and associated follow-up survey work.

- The Children's Parliament's [How Are You Doing?](#) COVID-19 Survey activity and associated journals and workshops.
- Public Health Scotland's COVID-19 [Early years resilience and impact survey](#)
- Survey work by the [Child Poverty Action Group](#).

Learners will be consulted during the [OECD Independent Review of CfE](#).

Education Scotland has begun to establish a database of where curriculum design expertise lies nationally, and will set up regular check-in meetings with these networks over the year. Evaluations of the programmes and engagements will help to identify next steps at all levels.

HM Inspectorate will consider the NIF evidence report and identified needs of the system when devising a programme of national thematic reviews and inspection.

Education Scotland will deliver the Learner Participation 3-18 professional learning programme as a series of twilight workshops by December 2021, which can be either face to face or remotely delivered.

Education Scotland will deliver the Recognising and Realising children's rights professional learning to practitioners, using digital technology. This will be a series of twilight workshops to enable more practitioners to participate, and will support schools to protect and respect children's rights as set out in the Scottish Government's Bill on incorporation. A CLD version is also being developed and will be delivered alongside the school version when possible.

Education Scotland will restart the Young Leaders of Learning Programme once restrictions are eased to enable children to visit other schools. A national training event will also take place.

Education Scotland will support practitioners in curriculum and sectoral areas through national and local professional learning activities such as webinars and network meetings throughout 2021, this will include the use of digital tools to support learning. This also includes national e-learning partners.

Education Scotland will continue to liaise with local authorities and the RICs to ensure the support offered at all levels of the system is meeting the needs within the current context and beyond. Education Scotland will continue to provide updates of key national messages relating to learning, teaching and assessment and moderation through appropriate forums during the academic session 2020-21.

Education Scotland will provide ongoing support during the academic session 2020-21 for the quality assurance of education content for national standardised assessments and continue to contribute to the development of reporting advice, training advice and policy development.

Education Scotland will continue to consult with ADES during the academic session 2020-21 around the collection of NIF qualitative and quantitative data to inform the NIF national reporting and planning (September 2021).

Education Scotland will continue to work with local authorities and RICs through locality working to support the needs of the system in the recovery phase.

Education Scotland will provide support for practitioners through national and local webinars and these have been identified by RICs to support them through the recovery phase.

Scottish Government will develop an overarching programme of race equality and anti-racism in education to encompass 3 separate, but interlinked, workstreams:

- Curriculum reform
- Racism and racist bullying
- Diversity in the teaching profession

These workstreams will be underpinned by a whole-system approach, giving consideration to areas such as assessment and qualifications, ITE, teacher professional development and leadership. Stakeholder engagement at official and Ministerial level will be a fundamental part of the development of an action plan containing short, medium and long-term ambitions, aligned with the 2021-24 Race Equality Action Plan.

The Scottish Government will publish its response to the recommendations in the ICEA's second formal report in early 2021. The recommendations will be used to inform future improvement action.

School improvement - case study

Belmont Academy



At Belmont Academy, South Ayrshire, the quality of education and the management of development priorities benefit from clear strategic direction. The senior leadership team support and challenge each other, and manage effectively the pace of change. They have been very successful in supporting staff to take forward school improvement priorities, and have developed successfully a culture of trust where staff feel valued, identify strongly with the vision and values of the school and share an understanding of the range of socio-economic factors that affect the young people in the school community.

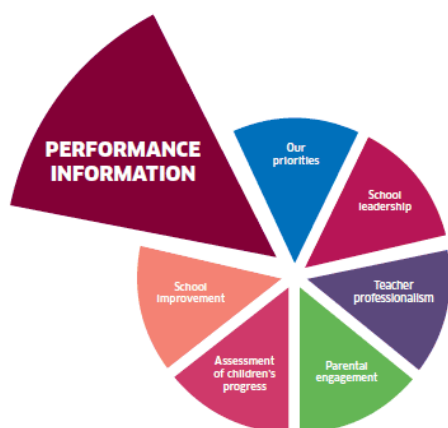
The school is explicit in its focus on promoting wellbeing, raising attainment and improving learners' experiences. Senior leaders link the school's allocation of funding to identified improvement priorities, which are based on the school's vision, values and aims, and link directly to local and national priorities. Departmental improvement plans align closely to the school improvement plan, with specific areas of focus. Staff are clear on how they are contributing to these priorities.

A major strength of the school's work lies in its approaches to empowering staff, who are empowered to take decisions and lead aspects of school improvement. Well-planned professional learning opportunities support this building of capacity. The aspiring middle and senior leader programmes are providing a useful vehicle for staff to develop leadership and mentoring skills. Senior leaders have ensured time is available to enable staff to engage in a range of professional learning opportunities and to collaborate with each other. Teachers are engaging with relevant professional standards through approaches to professional review and development. They are taking increasing responsibility for self-directed learning including undertaking accredited courses at masters level to support the work of the school. All teachers volunteer for working groups which provide opportunities for them to build positive relationships with colleagues and partners.

All teachers assume responsibility for developing aspects of their department's work or whole-school priorities. They are involved in approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning at both a whole-school and departmental level. Consultation with all stakeholders has resulted in an ambitious revised curriculum framework and delivery.

Senior leaders are aware of the importance of ensuring all young people, parents and partners continue to be involved fully to secure further school improvement.

Performance information



What is this?

All of the information and data we need to get a full picture of how well Scottish education is improving. We will gather together and analyse the data collected from each of the other key drivers of improvement.

What is the evidence telling us?

The PISA 2018 assessment indicated that Scotland's performance among 15 year olds had increased in Reading compared to 2015 and was similar in Maths and

Science. Compared to the OECD average, Scotland is above the average for Reading, and similar for Maths and Science. The background of students had less of an influence on attainment in Scotland than the OECD average.

The PISA 2018 Global Competence assessment showed that only two out of 26 countries had a higher average score than pupils in Scotland.

The Year 4 report on the Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF). The report found that nine out of ten (91%) of headteachers reported to have seen an improvement in closing the poverty-related attainment gap as a result of ASF supported approaches, an increase of 13 points since 2017.

For the first time, Pupil Equity Fund allocations of over £250 million were confirmed for two years (2020/21 and 2021/22) benefitting 97% of schools and giving headteachers assistance in their planning and decision making. As well as taking total investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to over £750 million over the last five years, this also extends the programme for a further year beyond this Parliamentary term and provides invaluable long term commitment.

New improvement and recovery actions for the year ahead.

The PISA 2021 assessment has been postponed until 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19. Results will be available in 2023.

The Year 5 Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) report will be published in March 2021.

The Behaviour in Scottish Schools (BISSR) 2021 research will be published.

Scottish Government will work with our partners, including the ICEA, to design the best approach to accelerating progress with closing the poverty related attainment gap, through the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Scottish Government will publish evidence of progress with our defining mission of closing the poverty related attainment gap by March 2021.

Performance information - case study

Whitburn Academy



In Whitburn Academy, West Lothian, senior leaders have a systematic strategic overview of progress for learners in the Broad General Education (BGE).

Senior leaders and teachers are increasingly making good use of data provided during young people's transition from primary to secondary school.

This is helping to increase teachers' knowledge of young people's prior learning, to improve progression and have a clearer view of how young people are achieving across the curriculum. Teachers are able to show the progress of learners through the BGE, regularly refreshing the tracking system with updates. The system allows teachers, and senior leaders, to benchmark over time. It also allows staff to compare the attainment of individual young people across all curriculum areas.

Increasingly, young people are discussing with their teachers and support staff how to progress their learning. They are setting targets for improvement. Teachers work collaboratively with other colleagues within the school and across the cluster and local hub of neighbouring secondary schools, to improve their judgement of young people's progress through Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers have a greater focus on National Benchmarks, particularly at fourth level. This is ensuring an appropriate gradient of learning for young people.

The school's robust approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress has allowed staff to respond better to young people's needs and interests with regard to curriculum pathways within the BGE and the senior phase.

Conclusion

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unavoidable impact on the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan. It has meant that, although we are still striving to gain a deeper understanding of our educational strengths and weaknesses, and to use that information to drive improvement, our primary focus for the next year is one of recovery and support.

The 2021 NIF and Improvement Plan may have fewer new actions than in previous years, but those actions are clearly focused on supporting the education system to recover from the impact that the pandemic has had on all levels of the system, from staff and students, to parents, carers and the wider community.

Over this past year, the Scottish education system has embodied the values of CfE and has pulled together to shoulder the collective responsibility for looking after the health, wellbeing and achievement of every child in Scotland. The actions set out under each of the drivers of improvement, will help support the whole system to work together and to continue to develop the skills, judgement, and creativity required to build a more resilient education system for the future.



Ongoing/completed activity from the 2020 National Improvement Plan

Action	Current Position
School Leadership	
SL79 Support for Into Headship will form part of our ongoing commitment to fund professional learning for teachers, including at school leadership level.	Business as usual Funding for Into Headship is in its sixth year, with Cohort 6 embarking on the programme in session 2020/21. It continues to be developed through a partnership approach between Education Scotland, seven universities and local authorities. Into Headship results in the award of the GTCS Standard for Headship, a mandatory requirement for new substantive head teachers since 1 August 2020. This is reflected in the 33% rise in uptake for Cohort 6.
SL80 We will continue to encourage more people into early learning and childcare, particularly those groups under-represented in the profession (men and minority ethnic communities) as well as in particular geographical areas.	Ongoing We wish to develop an early learning and childcare workforce that better represents Scottish society, so we are working to encourage anyone with protected characteristics to pursue a career in ELC, as part of our ongoing priority of growing the workforce. That includes, males, those from our ethnic minority communities, those with language skills and those with disabilities.
SL81 In 2020 we will work with the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) to engage those from ethnic minority communities into ELC and support the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) challenge fund to recruit and retain males into ELC.	Ongoing To promote careers in ELC to those from diverse ethnic communities, we have funded CEMVO, an umbrella body representing Ethnic Minority communities across Scotland, to engage with these communities and raise awareness of career opportunities in the ELC sector. CEMVO has held awareness-raising across Scotland since launching their programme in December 2018, and assisted many individuals on a 1-2-1 basis with applications for courses and jobs as well as providing guidance on interview techniques. To increase gender diversity in the sector, in 2018-19, we set up a £50K challenge fund, administered via the Scottish Funding Council, to investigate innovative ways of recruiting and retaining males on ELC training courses. West Lothian College and Inverness College UHI received funding to trial different approaches to meeting this challenge. To ensure learning from this work was disseminated widely, the Men In To Early Years conference was held in Stirling on 26 September 2019. We will continue to work with partners to identify, disseminate and promote good practice in the recruitment and retention of males into ELC going forward.
SL82 In 2020 Education Scotland will extend engagement in approaches to systems leadership via the expansion of the Evolving Systems Thinking Programme, and the Leading System Change Programme, and will contribute to whole system developments through collaboration and networking with other areas such as public health.	Ongoing In the 2019/20 academic session, the Evolving Systems Thinking (EST) programme began its regional delivery model with 164 participants across the 6 Regional Improvement Collaboratives. Prior to COVID-19, six of the nine programme days had been delivered in Forth Valley and West Lothian, Northern Alliance, South West and West Partnership. Both the South East and Tayside had completed three days out of nine. Face to face delivery was put on hold due to COVID-19 in March so instead of the programme, and to support leadership during COVID and recovery post-COVID, each RIC area has had the opportunity to engage in seminars around key themes. Plans have now been developed in partnership with RIC leads to facilitate online completion of EST for the current 164 participants.

	<p>The Leading System Change programme, as was, has been postponed in agreement with ADES. A review of this work will take place in 2020/21 academic year with the aim of broadening out the programme and engaging more with the Collective Leadership offer which also involves colleagues in Public Health Scotland.</p> <p>There has been a continued focus on supporting system leadership since March including Blethers, Headspace events and international Blethers and collective leadership events, as below:</p> <p>(i) Headspace: To support headteachers during lockdown, more online activity was offered including a range of 'Headspace' sessions designed to offer a safe, sharing space. Eight online sessions for headteachers were offered as part of the Headspace 2019/20 programme. Themes included early learning and primary transitions, secondary transitions, remote learning, leadership in challenging times, health and wellbeing for headteachers and recovery planning for schools. 130 attendees joined these Headspace sessions and 86 headteachers attended a 'Big Blether' event for headteachers in May 2020.</p> <p>At the start of the 2020/21 academic session, the Headspace Recovery series offered themed sessions which took place as schools returned in August and September. 114 headteachers attended these sessions, the themes for which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to school • Headspace Orientation session - using MS Teams • IDL and its place in the recovery curriculum • The role of the Parent Council • New to Headship - An opportunity to network and share experiences with others who have just become head teachers or are in an acting position • Hybrid learning and digital pedagogy lessons learned • Improvement planning recovery priorities • Responding to parents • Understanding and supporting inclusion • Supporting staff health and wellbeing <p>(ii) International Blether series: more than 150 headteachers and system leaders registered for the first three International Blether sessions with leading figures in international educational leadership, Peter DeWitt, Jenni Donohoo and Paul Bloomberg, providing 'thinking sessions' that were free and accessible to all practitioners in Scotland. Lead Specialists in the PLL team used their own networks to establish these sessions in which the international guests provided their time and resource free of charge.</p> <p>(iii) Collective Leadership work: the PLL team have supported and promoted work developed by the Collective Leadership team in Scottish Government which was designed to support system level leadership and change.</p>
<p>SL83</p> <p>During 2020 the Headteachers' Charter and new national guidance on an empowered system will be finalised to support local areas in ensuring that decisions are made as close to the child or young person as possible.</p>	<p>Paused (C-19)</p> <p>All sections of the guidance were published as agreed drafts by October 2019. Feedback was invited with a focused period of engagement from January to March 2020. There had been a limited response to this prior to COVID-19. The feedback mechanism remained open until June 2020, with no additional comments received during this extended time. The School Empowerment Steering Group will continue to liaise with stakeholders to finalise the guidance as soon as is practically possible.</p>

<p>SL84 During 2020 we will continue to work with partners to raise awareness of the guidance, helping embed it in daily school/LA practices, and continuing to measure impact/progress so we can work together to address challenges where they arise.</p>	<p>Paused (C-19) As above, the guidance is not yet finalised. Action ongoing into 2021.</p>
<p>SL85 In 2020 we will continue to work with the short-term working group on Diversity in the Teaching Profession that has been established by the Strategic Board for Teacher Education, which will look at increasing the number of teachers from under-represented groups at all levels in Scottish schools.</p>	<p>Ongoing This has been augmented by the September 2020 PfG commitment which pledges to "ensure that the diversity of our society is recognised and represented in the education workforce at all levels in line with the ambitions of the Race Equality Framework. As part of this work we will address the under representation of Minority Ethnic teachers in Scotland by exploring alternative pathways into teaching for Minority Ethnic and other underrepresented groups". While the Diversity in the Teaching Profession working group will conclude in the spring of 2021, the ambition to continue to increase the number of teachers from under-represented groups at all levels remains a key element of our programme of work for 2021 which will build on existing activity to address race inequality in Scotland's schools.</p>
<p>SL86 We are in the process of establishing a Gender Equality Task Force in Education and Learning, as recommended by the First Minister's National Advisory Committee for Women & Girls. Throughout 2020, the Task Force, chaired by the Deputy First Minister, will consider where gaps exist in the provision of a gender neutral experience of education and learning in Scotland, and publish a set of recommendations which will address those gaps.</p>	<p>Paused (C-19) The Gender Equality Taskforce, chaired by the Deputy First Minister met for the first time in February 2019. Progress slowed during the spring and summer as a result of COVID-19, however, consideration is now being given by the Secretariat and members as to how to refocus this workstream.</p>
<p>Teacher professionalism</p>	
<p>TP01 The intention remains to fund professional learning for teachers in this area (Masters level Professional Learning) including at school leadership level.</p>	<p>Ongoing The Scottish Government continues to support Masters level learning for teachers through the Teacher Education Partnerships with £750,000 committed for 20/21. The Partnerships are in the process of submitting their bids setting out the activity to be supported.</p> <p>For 20/21 the Scottish Government will continue to fully fund the Into Headship programme supporting 244 participants across 7 university partners at a cost of nearly £750,000. A further £50,000 funding is available to support participants undertaking the In Headship programme. The application process was extended to end September as a result of COVID-19.</p>
<p>TP07 GTCS have strengthened accreditation procedures and are also reviewing the professional standards which, in time, are likely to require ITE courses to be amended.</p>	<p>Ongoing The GTCS have been reviewing the Professional Standards and these have been re-worked following consultation with focus groups across the autumn of 2020 to provide for minor adjustments. The intention is to carry out a programme of engagement with the profession to help them familiarise themselves with the new Standards. The approved Standards will be published on 13 January 2021 and will go live in August 2021.</p>
<p>TP31 Education Scotland will be commissioning new STEM related professional learning</p>	<p>Ongoing In 2019-20, Education Scotland provided £1.9m of STEM professional learning grants, supporting 162 projects. Around £800k</p>

to complement that provided through existing programmes, including CLPL related to numeracy and mathematics.	of funding has been made available in 2020-21 to enable these projects to continue in 2020 but it was decided not to commission a new round of grants in 2020-21 in recognition of the priority of education recovery activities. We will keep this under review going into 2021-22. Support to schools and local authorities for STEM learning continued to be provided by Education Scotland's STEM advisers, the RAISE programme and SSERC and this will continue into 2021-22.
TP32 Additional collaborative professional learning opportunities in STEM will become available through the activities of the college-led STEM Hubs.	Ongoing The STEM hubs have been renamed as STEM partnerships, in recognition that partnerships have formed the core of the activity. Colleges have continued to build up these partnerships and to provide professional learning and increased engagement activity. This activity will continue in 2021-22.
TP34 A Young STEM Leaders programme to grow mentoring and inspiration for STEM for young people by young people will be established. There will be piloting in the first half of 2019 with the programme starting to be rolled out in the second half of the year.	Ongoing The Young STEM Leaders programme was piloted in 72 centres from June 2019 onwards. The programme is available at CfE Second, Third and Fourth Levels, underpinned by a framework that identifies the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of a young STEM leader. Over 600 Young STEM leaders took part in the pilot phase and delivered a range of STEM activities, events and interactions in their school, community or youth group to inspire other children and young people to take up STEM. The programme was formally launched in October 2020 and is now available to all schools. We hope to see it continue to grow in 2021-22.
TP85 The first Annual report was published in February 2019, The second Annual Report is expected to be published in March 2020. A review of the KPIs for the Strategy is currently being undertaken to determine whether any revisions are needed.	Business as usual The second annual report was published in March 2020 outlining progress across all the actions in the STEM strategy and providing a report against revised KPIs. Annual reports will be produced for the lifetime of the STEM strategy.
TP86 In 2020, the Scottish Government will consider how the support and learning for probationer teachers on the TIS and FR can be strengthened to provide greater consistency towards achieving full professional registration with the GTCS and, working with key stakeholders, we will take steps to identify and agree what additional areas of professional learning are needed to improve the support available to post probation teachers.	Ongoing Additional support for early career teachers has been developed in partnership and agreed through the workforce support workstream of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group. This package of support was launched in September 2020 and will be implemented throughout the 2020/21 session.
TP87 Attendance at the twilight workshops will be monitored and the sessions evaluated to ensure both the content and concept are useful for participants. The evaluation will be completed in time for the next cohort (August 2020).	Complete Twilight workshops were offered in the 2019/20 academic session to current participants, past participants and a 'bring a friend' invite sought to expand the learning of the Teacher Leadership Programme workshops by also attracting an audience not yet engaged in the programme. 96% rated the workshops 'very good' or 'good'. When asked how likely they were to implement what they had learned at the workshop into their practice 66% stated 'very likely', 29% 'likely' and 2% 'neutral.'
TP88 The additional recall day will take place in January 2020. This will be monitored to	Complete Successful recall days were delivered in January with 151 out of the 224 programme participants registering to attend (67%) versus 201 (90%) attending the induction days. Attendance at the induction and

establish if it has an impact on drop off rates within the programme.	the recall days were not pre-requisites of programme completion, however were recommended. It is difficult to identify the impact of the recall day in terms of the overall programme completions this year due to a wide number of unexpected variables (the early closure of schools, staff working from home and subsequent impact on workload). However, given the exclusively online delivery model for this recovery year, the recall days as well as some monthly 'touch points' are being introduced to support engagement.
TP89 Supporting Teacher Leadership participants have been invited to the TLP summit to promote the programme as a next step for TLP participants.	Paused (C-19) In the 2019/20 academic session, the change from public celebration to an online TLP summit as a result of COVID-19 meant this change was not implemented, but the ES Lead Specialist is considering how this might work for future planning.
TP90 Recent development of the endorsement process is expected to result in an increase in the number of programmes being submitted for endorsement and therefore the scope of activities on the online resource will grow. Increased regional working by the PLL team and delivery of the programmes on a regional basis is expected to raise awareness of the online resource in across Scotland. Additional communications may be needed in certain areas to promote the online resource.	Business as usual A programme that has been endorsed by Education Scotland demonstrates that it is informed by the national model of professional learning and links effectively to the relevant professional standards and current policy context. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of endorsed programmes: 61 • Programmes endorsed since October 2019: 19 • Programmes currently in the endorsement cycle but not yet endorsed: 3 <p>Recently endorsed programmes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Innovative Teacher Programme • Microsoft Showcase Schools Programme • North Lanarkshire Council Principal Teacher Leadership Programme • North Lanarkshire Council Depute Headteacher Teacher Leadership Programme • North Lanarkshire Council Headteacher Leadership Programme • SAMEE Coaching and Mentoring Programme • Edinburgh Learns – Teaching and Learning Programme • Forth Valley and West Lothian Literacy Academy • Forth Valley and West Lothian Numeracy Academy <p>Endorsed programmes have successfully passed through a robust set of criteria and feature on Education Scotland's Professional Learning and Leadership website, an online resource supporting professional learning for educational professionals at all stages of their career.</p> <p>There are approximately 16,337 registered users (up from 9,500 registered users in October 2019). The PLL team and colleagues within ES continue to develop, revise and integrate new professional learning activities into our online resource. There are now over 70 Professional Learning Activities (PLAs) available to practitioners and since March a further 17 PLAs were developed specifically to support the system during COVID-19 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Online Teaching • Relationships, Nurture and Compassion: essential ingredients for building a safe base for learners • Adaptive Leadership • Supporting children and young people through grief and loss • Family learning planning and delivery • Family Learning – Learning At Home
TP91 Within the PLL programmes being offered, Excellence in Headship offers a	Ongoing The Headspace series (see SL82) was introduced to support headteachers during lockdown and designed to offer a safe, sharing

<p>session that directly supports the health and wellbeing of headteachers and their teams ('Creating a mentally healthy school' and 'Coaching: Developing a Community of Practice'). Other programmes will also, where possible, include content relevant to health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>space. Since they started there have been 330 attendees (including potential repeats) to these and the headteacher Big Blether sessions focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to school • New to Headship - An opportunity to network and share experiences with others who have just become head teachers or are in an acting position • Supporting staff health and wellbeing <p>The PLL team has also been supporting the work of the CERG Workstream 6, chaired jointly by ES, SG and ADES. The PLL team working with colleagues in GTCS and SG Learning Directorate are co-ordinating the delivery of a package of support focused on educator wellbeing which contains three main elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mental health support for the school workforce with access to reflective supervision; b. Coaching and mentoring education system offer; c. Enhanced support for post-probation teachers. <p>This package represents accelerated and focused support for school staff which builds on pre-existing work which had been progressing in partnership with stakeholders prior to the outbreak of COVID-19.</p> <p>The coaching and mentoring offer comprises two elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional learning in order to build capacity and understanding within the education system • immediate access to coaching and mentoring for target groups to provide targeted and intensive support <p>The post probationer package of support is named 'Stepping Stones: Support for teachers in their early career'. This package will include a space on the Education Scotland Professional Learning resource which will provide access to a series of workshops, online national 'Blethers', Coaching and Mentoring Matters resources and specific PLAs. This package of support is designed to provide immediate support to the education system and the support of the stakeholder group in promoting it widely will be vital in ensuring there is awareness in the system of the package of supports available. ES Lead Specialist will be co-ordinating and leading on this key piece of work.</p> <p>Within the PLL programmes being offered, the Excellence in Headship programme offers a session that directly supports the health and wellbeing of headteachers and their teams ('Creating a mentally healthy school' and 'Coaching: Developing a Community of Practice'). Other programmes will also, where possible, include content relevant to health and wellbeing. The EiH Stretch programme includes a series of sessions in partnership with University College London which will focus on headteacher wellbeing. The PLL team is also working in partnership with headteachers from Scotland, Ireland and Wales to deliver a Tri Nations Collaboration "blether" on headteacher wellbeing.</p>
<p>TP92 Education Scotland is engaging with teacher unions and employers to increase the support available to teachers including the creation of a teacher innovation fund.</p>	<p>Ongoing This action was originally included within the work of the Enabling Teacher Agency group utilising funding for professional learning agreed as part of the teacher pay agreement in 2019. As a result of COVID-19, priorities have changed with a stronger focus now on wellbeing. The innovation fund did not happen and instead funding was used to provide resources and support for wellbeing. The</p>

	CERG Workstream 6 group agreed a package of support which includes access to coaching and mentoring support, a programme for post-probation teachers and access to reflective supervision.
TP93 A collaborative system leadership EiH Learn session consisting of a number of days that will deepen professional knowledge and practice through collaborative professional enquiry and research linked to international research will be introduced as part of the overall EiH programme.	Ongoing The Excellence in Headship programme is now in its fourth year and has evolved considerably over that time. In 2020 it includes a new range of on line EiH Learn sessions and a new EiH stretch programme. EiH Stretch will explore the key elements of collaborative systems and aims to provide further development opportunities for headteachers to support their capacity to contribute to system level leadership. EiH aims to support headteachers who have been in post for five years or more: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver professional learning to deepen professional knowledge and practice through collaborative enquiry • Facilitate access to peer coaching and/or peer mentoring • Develop knowledge and understanding of public policy development and leading beyond authority • Provide opportunities for national and international knowledge exchange.
TP94 The Masters Framework Working Group chaired by Education Scotland and including university partners has identified planned next steps including developing new guidance to support practitioners in identifying future pathways towards Masters.	Ongoing Due to COVID-19, this work was paused. Universities have been asked to provide information to populate the revised Framework and this should be complete by December 2020. Case studies will be gathered from Masters participants by March 2021 to support future recruitment.
TP95 We will continue to encourage more people into teaching, particularly those groups under-represented in the profession (men and minority ethnic communities) as well as in particular subjects (STEM) and geographical areas.	Ongoing A new phase of the Teacher Recruitment Campaign launched in November 2020. The campaign is aimed to encourage undergraduates of all genders and ethnicity at Scottish Universities to register for PGDE Teacher Training courses. While the campaign was originally created to target STEM undergraduates it has since been developed to cover all courses.
TP96 Contracted by Scottish Government, University of West of Scotland are developing some of the modules in our online programme of CPL for ELC sector that will be widely accessible and freely available to ELC practitioners in all sectors. One of the modules in this programme is designed to increase staff skills, knowledge and confidence in delivering age appropriate learning in all STEM subjects. This is due to be available to the sector in early 2020. The module will be designed in a way that will allow the University of West of Scotland to collect data around impact of the module in practitioners' confidence, knowledge and skills	Complete A STEM online professional learning module for ELC practitioners was launched in January 2020. It aims to help early learning practitioners develop an understanding of how to use inspiring, child-led and play based approaches to STEM learning in a range of environments in an inclusive and easily accessible way.
TP97 In 2020, the Scottish Government will consider how the support and learning for probationer teachers on the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) and Flexible Route (FR) can be strengthened to	Ongoing Additional support for early career teachers has been developed in partnership and agreed through the workforce support workstream of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group. This package of support was launched in September 2020 and will be implemented throughout the 2020/21 session.

provide greater consistency towards achieving full professional registration with the GTCS and, working with key stakeholders, will take steps to identify and agree what additional areas of professional learning are needed to improve the support available to post-probation teachers	
Parental engagement	
PE04 Early Learning and Childcare Quality Action Plan includes a commitment to increase support for evidence-based family learning to embed this in the early learning offer for families facing disadvantage.	Ongoing The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2019/20 makes clear that we will use the opportunities presented by our expansion of early learning and childcare (ELC) and provide £500,000 to establish the Family Learning Scotland Programme. Family learning will be offered in or near ELC settings and will be targeted at priority families. It will help parents to learn about early childhood development and how to support their children's learning. It will also build parents' confidence in their own capacity to learn, acting as a catalyst to help them take up adult learning, training opportunities and gain employment. Peeple has been contracted to train and support 432 early years practitioners across Scotland over a 2 year period to implement the Peep learning together training and the Peep progression Pathway. In recent months, in response to COVID-19, Peeple has developed a suite of online training material to complement the programme. Implementation of the training programme began in September 2020. By December 2020, 100 practitioners had received their initial training. This offer is intended to enhance the work already being implemented locally, and aims to increase support for evidence-based family learning programmes embedded within the early learning and childcare offer for families facing disadvantage.
PE18 Scottish Government to work with the GTCS/ Scottish Education Workforce Council to review and improve the Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development offer to headteachers in relation to parental engagement. Detailed commitments will be contained in a National Action Plan on Parental Engagement and Family Learning by June 2018.	Paused (C-19) The Scottish Government and COSLA published the "Learning Together" Action Plan in August 2018. The plan contains a number of actions relating to workforce, professional development and skills. These actions continue to be progressed in partnership with Education Scotland and the GTCS. Statutory guidance was consulted on January - June 2020 and the responses to this consultation are currently being analysed. A round table discussion with ITE institutions, with a view to sharing practice and approach across ITE, was due to take place this year however owing to Covid-19 this work has been paused. We will explore holding this meeting in due course.
PE30 Almost double the hours of early learning and childcare to 1140 per year	Paused (C-19) The Scottish Government reached a landmark multi-year funding agreement with COSLA on 27 April 2018, which will provide £567m additional revenue funding by 2021-22 and £476m capital funding over the period 2017-18 to 2020-21 to support the expansion of funded ELC. Due to the impact of Covid-19 it was announced in April 2020 there will be a pause in the statutory roll-out of 1140 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds, and eligible 2 year olds, which was due to be introduced in August 2020. However, despite the pause more than 80% of children are receiving more than the current statutory entitlement of 600 hours, whilst 61% of eligible children – more than 56,000 – are already receiving 1,140 hours of funded ELC.

	<p>To ensure that the funded ELC entitlement is delivered in high quality settings, the sector was working towards the introduction of Funding Follows the Child and the underpinning National Standard. This was to have been introduced alongside the statutory roll-out of 1140 hours of funded ELC entitlement in August 2020. Interim Guidance published on 30 July 2020 set out that whilst it is still expected that the principles of Funding Follows the Child will continue to be met, flexibilities may be required for some aspects of the National Standard.</p> <p>The ELC Joint Delivery Board commissioned an assessment of readiness to deliver the 1140 hours expansion, taking account of capital, workforce, capacity and other risks. This was supplemented by an independent health check of the expansion programme. Having carefully reviewed all the evidence the ELC Joint Delivery Board recommended that the statutory duty to deliver 1140 hours of funded ELC should be reinstated with effect from August 2021. This recommendation has been agreed by Scottish Ministers and COSLA Leaders and the Scottish Government will bring forward the associated legislation before the end of this Parliament.</p> <p>In order to support capacity and sustainability in the sector a range of support for childcare providers has been introduced following the impacts of the pandemic including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuing payments for funded ELC regardless of whether a service was closed; - the introduction of the £11.2m Transitional Support Fund for day care of children providers to support them meet the costs associated with the public health guidance for the sector; and - providing £420,000 for the Childminding Workforce Support Fund to support childminders who have struggled to access support through other routes.
<p>PE36</p> <p>The joint Scottish Government/COSLA “Learning Together” Action Plan was published on 21 August 2018. The plan contains a variety of national actions in relation to both involvement and engagement which will be implemented in 2019, including: review and strengthen statutory guidance in time for academic year 2019/20</p>	<p>Missed</p> <p>A working group was set up to develop fresh statutory guidance. The group met four times over the course of 2019, and developed draft amended guidance by the end of August 2019. This guidance was consulted on from January - June 2020 and responses were published, where permission was given, on 5th August 2020.</p> <p>The responses to the consultation on the revised statutory guidance are currently being analysed and a report with the findings of this will issue in due course. The cross stakeholder parental engagement steering group (including Scottish Government, ADES, NPFS and Connect) agreed to postpone the issuing of revised guidance to early 2021 at the earliest. This is due to the additional pressures of Covid-19 and the need to ensure that any guidance takes account of the current situation. This means that the final guidance will now be issued in 2021.</p>
<p>PE38</p> <p>The joint Scottish Government/COSLA “Learning Together” Action Plan was published on 21 August 2018. The plan contains a variety of national actions in relation to both involvement and engagement which will be implemented in 2019, including: raise awareness of participatory budgeting amongst parents</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Learning Directorate's Parental Involvement Team continue to liaise with SG colleagues who lead on participatory budgeting to ensure that steps are taken to further raise awareness amongst parent organisations and across local authorities and parent councils. NPFS have highlighted the potential for participatory budgeting to parent councils via social media. SG delivered an awareness-raising workshop at the national parental engagement network in autumn 2019. A Participatory Budgeting in Schools Group has been established and has continued to meet during the pandemic and discuss raising awareness of participatory budgeting</p>

	in schools. A participatory budgeting resource containing guidance and support materials is now available on the National Improvement Hub.
PE39 The joint Scottish Government/COSLA "Learning Together" Action Plan was published on 21 August 2018. The plan contains a variety of national actions in relation to both involvement and engagement which will be implemented in 2019, including: work with local authority partners to increase access to home-school link workers and similar roles	Paused (C-19) The first meeting of a national working group was held in August 2018, a second meeting on 18 January 2019. A survey of local authorities was issued in late 2018 in order to provide more comprehensive information on access to home/school link workers, current coverage and the various models being adopted by local authorities. Education Scotland published additional guidance on the home/school link worker in March 2019. Further monitoring of this commitment has been put on hold due to Covid-19.
PE40 The joint Scottish Government/COSLA "Learning Together" Action Plan was published on 21 August 2018. The plan contains a variety of national actions in relation to both involvement and engagement which will be implemented in 2019, including: invest in the Parent Club marketing campaign	Ongoing A joint literacy/numeracy and Eat Better, Feel Better campaign ran in 2019 and independent evaluation is complete. All planned topics were consolidated to the Parent Club website increasing visibility of the content and cost effectiveness. Next steps are to respond to the latest research among parents of children (8wks to 5yrs) and consolidate further topics into Parent Club with support from partner organisations NHS Health Scotland and NHS Inform. Read, Write, Count bag-gifting took place in November 2020 alongside a targeted Parent Club campaign to engage parents in supporting children's learning at home. A resource for parents is included within the Read, Write, Count bags with fun ideas of how to use the games which include story cubes, Talk It Out and Act It Out cards, Coastal Commotion cards and a measuring tape In addition - and in response to Covid-19 - a wide range of school-related parent information and advice was developed for the new, dedicated Coronavirus Parent Club page. This included advice on blended/remote learning, school closures, the re-opening of schools and other education settings and a variety of associated as well as further specific Covid-19 issues (e.g. Additional Support Needs). Social media content was developed and shared and core Q&A information was provided to parents via the Parent Club web pages. Some key performance information for the Parent Club Covid-19 campaign as a whole as follows: Awareness of campaign among parents/carers of children aged 0-16 - Target: 40% Achieved: 55% Proportion of campaign recognisers taking any action - Target: 30% Achieved: 83% Proportion of campaign recognisers identifying a positive/empathetic/ reassuring/ supportive message from the campaign - Target: 44% Achieved: 51%
PE44 The Scottish Government will develop a national online professional learning module for ELC practitioners on supporting parents to further engage in their children's learning. This will be ready by the end of 2019.	Complete The Scottish Government has developed a national online continued professional learning module for the ELC workforce, on supporting parents to further engage in their children's learning. This was launched in June 2020, with 229 learners having successfully completed the module as at Oct 2020.
PE70 Education Scotland will continue to hold the Family Learning National Network meetings which brings together practitioners, academics, researchers and	Ongoing Education Scotland have continued to hold Family Learning National Network meetings and these will continue until the end of 2021 in line with the life of the National Learning Together Action Plan.

<p>polymakers who share good practice and expertise.</p>	
<p>PE71 The results from an Education Scotland-led Family Learning survey will be available and synthesised in 2020. These survey findings will help to identify professional learning delivered by local authorities, third sector and national organisations. This will be used to signpost practitioners to helpful advice, inform discussions in Regional Improvement Collaboratives and support practitioners to develop and/or deliver family learning programmes.</p>	<p>Cancelled Work on the Family Learning survey concluded when the original lockdown was introduced. Due to the impact of Covid-19 on the delivery of face-to-face family learning, activity in this area is no longer required at this time. It is recognised the data gathered, while still relevant, is pre-Covid-19 and therefore does not capture a true reflection of current practice.</p>
<p>PE72 Education Scotland will work with local authority partners, colleges, third sector and other partners to develop case studies which will highlight examples of interesting practice and evaluation strategies.</p>	<p>Complete Education Scotland has worked in partnership with Moorfoot Primary School and SCILT to develop a case study on 'Engaging parents in language learning - BSL'. Education Scotland published the case study in October 2020.</p>
<p>PE73 The Education Scotland Family Learning Framework will be refreshed to update case studies, research and policy and strategy. This will support practitioners with up-to-date information.</p>	<p>Complete Updated and published in January 2020.</p>
<p>PE74 Education Scotland will continue to work with Regional Improvement Collaboratives, local authorities, practitioners, Scottish Prison Service, Colleges and Universities, Early Learning and Childcare settings and schools during 2020/21 to help them further develop approaches to family learning.</p>	<p>Ongoing A range of online professional learning opportunities for practitioners have been developed and delivered in recent months in response to the impact of the pandemic on practice. To support this, Education Scotland has published practice examples and other online resources. Education Scotland will continue to review this work in line with its delivery model and this will continue until the end of 2021 in line with the life of the National Learning Together Action Plan.</p>
<p>PE75 Education Scotland will conduct a thematic inspection review of family learning in 2020.</p>	<p>Paused (C-19) The field work and thematic review report on family learning has been completed. Due to Covid-19, the publication of this has been paused to gather education recovery updates from a range of establishments and settings highlighted in the report.</p>
<p>PE76 Education Scotland will continue to promote and support its Review of Learning at Home and its Family Learning Framework alongside its work to support family learning.</p>	<p>Ongoing The Review of Learning at Home and the Family Learning Framework are promoted at online CLPL sessions, and in professional dialogue with LAs, RICs, and national organisations and this will continue until the end of 2021 in line with the life of the National Learning Together Action Plan.</p>
<p>PE77 The Scottish Government will promote its Read, Write, Count / Parent Club campaign throughout 2020, complementing the work that schools do to encourage learning at home.</p>	<p>Complete As part of Book Week Scotland, Read, Write, Count gift bags were distributed to P2 and P3 pupils at school. To complement this, a campaign was launched through Parent Club to support parents to engage with the books and games included within the gift bags at home with their children.</p>
<p>PE78 Scottish Government will consult on draft statutory guidance on parental involvement and engagement in early 2020. This will address various aspects of</p>	<p>Complete Draft statutory guidance on the Parental Involvement Act was consulted on from January - June 2020. Responses were published, where permission was given, on 5th August 2020.</p>

parental involvement, including Parent Councils.	The responses to the consultation on the revised statutory guidance are currently being analysed and a report with the findings of this will issue in due course.
PE79 Scottish Government will work with partners to develop accompanying advice and support materials during the course of 2020. These will be provided alongside the final statutory guidance.	Ongoing As a result of Covid-19, consultation on the draft statutory guidance, and therefore the accompanying advice materials, was put on hold on a temporary basis. This was agreed with the cross-stakeholder steering group on parental engagement which includes the National Parent Forum of Scotland, Connect and ADES. The plan is to publish the revised statutory guidance in early 2021. The development of further practical advice materials will be considered in this context. However, a number of items of Covid-19 specific practical guidance materials were developed between April and August 2020 (e.g. Scottish Government collaborated with the National Parent Forum to develop NPFS parent guidance on return to schools, on "Learning at Home in Lockdown" and on Blended Learning). In November 2020, summary guidance on Reporting to Parents and Involving / Engaging Parent Councils during Covid-19 was produced from the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group alongside more detailed advice to practitioners. The aim of this work was provide schools with practical advice on how to adapt in the context of Covid-19 and to ensure that parental involvement and engagement continues to be supported, all be it in different circumstances and via different methods.
PE80 Scottish Government will continue to share practice and expertise via the national parental engagement network throughout 2020. Education Scotland will share learning via Regional Improvement Collaboratives.	Ongoing Although the Learning Together National Network cannot meet in person at this time, we continue to update members of ongoing work on a regular basis and the group met virtually in June 2020 and again in October 2020. Another virtual meeting is scheduled for March 2021.
PE81 Scottish Government and Education Scotland will promote the Parental and Carer Empowerment Guidance as well as a new National Parent Forum Nutshell on Parental Empowerment as part of the broader school empowerment reforms.	Ongoing All sections of the Empowered System guidance, which included the Parents and Carers section, were published as agreed drafts by October 2019. Feedback was invited, with a focused period of engagement in place from January to March 2020. There had been limited response to the engagement prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. The feedback mechanism remained open until June 2020, with no additional comments received during this extended time. The School Empowerment Steering Group will continue to liaise with stakeholders to finalise the guidance as soon as is practically possible. NPFS has produced a nutshell as a guide to Scotland's Empowered System, the Importance of Parents within this System and Parents' Rights and Responsibilities which can be downloaded from their website.
PE82 Education Scotland will continue to promote its Reporting to Parents and Carers Guidance for schools and ELC settings document.	Ongoing The guidance continues to be promoted through existing channels and networks and this will continue until the end of 2021 in line with the life of the National Learning Together Action Plan.
PE83 Scottish Government will work in early 2020 to consult on revised statutory guidance relating to the 2006 Scottish Schools Parental involvement Act.	Complete Draft statutory guidance on the Parental Involvement Act was consulted on from January - June 2020. Responses were published , where permission was given, on 5th August 2020. The responses to the consultation on the revised statutory guidance are currently being analysed and a report with the findings of this will issue in due course.
PE84	Ongoing

<p>Scottish Government will promote the new guidance on parental and carer empowerment as part of the broader school empowerment reforms.</p>	<p>All sections of the Empowered System guidance, which included the Parents and Carers section, were published as agreed drafts by October 2019. Feedback was invited with a focused period of engagement in place from January to March 2020. There had been limited response to the engagement prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. The feedback mechanism remained open until June 2020, with no additional comments received during this extended time. The School Empowerment Steering Group will continue to liaise with stakeholders to finalise the guidance as soon as is practically possible.</p>
<p>PE85 There will be improvement activity throughout 2020 by Regional Improvement Collaborative, local authorities, practitioners, early learning and childcare settings, schools, relevant partners and stakeholder groups during 2020/21 to help to further develop approaches to parental involvement, parental engagement, learning at home and family learning.</p>	<p>Ongoing Work is ongoing with practitioners in RICS/LAs and national organisations to develop approaches to Parental Involvement/Parental Engagement/Family Learning/Learning at Home during Covid-19 and in recovery. This will continue until the end of 2021 in line with the life of the National Learning Together Action Plan.</p>
<p>PE86 Education Scotland will work with local authority partners to develop further case studies on examples of Home-school link worker/service.</p>	<p>Cancelled Producing further case studies has not been possible due to the pandemic. However Education Scotland has maintained contact with the workforce to develop online learning for practitioners drawing practice examples from Scotland, other parts of the UK and Internationally.</p>
<p>PE87 Education Scotland will continue to refresh the content of the ParentZone Scotland website throughout 2020.</p>	<p>Business as usual Parentzone Scotland continues to be reviewed and refreshed with specific advice and resources published for parents since lockdown commenced.</p>
<p>PE88 Scottish Government and Education Scotland will support regular Learning Together National Network meetings to bring together practitioners, academics, researchers and policymakers who have been identified as 'champions' with a view to sharing good practice and expertise, making new connections and reviewing evidence of what is working well. In 2020 there will be renewed focus on learning and sharing of practice relating to secondary schools.</p>	<p>Business as usual Scottish Government and Education Scotland have continued to support Learning Together National Meetings. The network meetings in 2020 to date have focused on sharing practice on engaging parents and families during the pandemic with plans for 2021 still to be finalised.</p>
<p>Assessment of children's progress</p>	
<p>AC01 From April 2018, we will also draw upon the Care Inspectorate's inspections data to assess the extent to which graduate-level practitioners are improving outcomes for children.</p>	<p>Paused (C-19) The Scottish Government is working with the Care Inspectorate to understand how the policy is being implemented and whether Equity and Excellence Leads are being deployed in the best way for promoting quality of ELC and improving child outcomes. From September 2019, this included a specific focus area for the remainder of the inspection year to understand how Equity and Excellence Leads are being deployed in ELC settings in Scotland and assess what indications there are of early impact of Leads on: children's learning and wellbeing outcomes; family engagement and involvement in their child's learning; and practitioner skills. The Special Inspection Focus was paused due to Covid-19. We are drawing together the data collected to date alongside case studies of good practice in the work Leads have been doing, including during lockdown, into a progress report.</p>

<p>AC02 From 2020, we will also draw upon two additional health visitor assessments at 13 months and at around 54 months.</p>	<p>Ongoing The first tranche of data from the 13-15 month and 4-5 year old review was published in September 2020. Coverage rates vary for these reviews as the rollout of the Universal Health Visiting Pathway continues. Locally, the coverage across Scotland should increase year on year. These additional data sets should provide a more holistic picture of child development among the under 5s. The earlier review point at 13-15 month should provide information to enable early intervention to support parents where this is required.</p>
<p>AC03 From 2021, we anticipate a revised ELC census that will provide additional data on some of the drivers of children's outcomes. Work is ongoing in all of these data development areas. However, the main data gap is around health and wellbeing in the younger primary years. Recent evidence, particularly from Growing Up in Scotland (GUS), has highlighted the importance of quality to ensure better outcomes for children. It showed that the most important factor is that early learning and development is delivered by a profession that is dedicated to the care, learning and development of our youngest children. This is being drawn upon in taking forward actions from the ELC Quality Action Plan. SG is carrying out an exercise to understand how information is currently shared and whether there are any existing barriers. As part of this, we will be identifying examples of good practice with a view to sharing these more widely. We will also consider what action can be taken to address any variability in take up rates of the 27-30 month review across authorities.</p>	<p>Paused (C-19) Preparatory work was delayed to enable data on the number of hours spent in ELC, which is a driver of child outcomes, to be available from the ELC census due to the delayed roll out of SEEMiS Early Years which we are reliant on for the new census process. It will now be 2022 before we have individual level data on children accessing funded ELC.</p> <p>Data is currently available on the development of children at age 27-30 months. We continue to monitor uptake rates of the 27-30 month review and the additional reviews at 13-15 months and 4-5 years. We are continuing to see increasing rates of uptake within the historical data and monitor the current uptake of reviews during the pandemic. This information can be used to support children and their families when additional support is required, using a joined up approach in the spirit of GIRFEC.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing data is available at aggregate level for 4-12 year olds through the Scottish Health Survey, and for 13 and 15 year olds from SALSUS. We are working on introducing a new Health and Wellbeing Census that will provide data for children and young people from late primary upwards.</p>
<p>AC11 Two significant areas of development of data on school leaver destinations are underway. The first is to improve the data set by including employment data. Scottish Government and SDS are working with HMRC to develop solutions that will allow individual level employment data to be shared to support service delivery and service reform. The aim is to have these arrangements in place by Autumn 2018.</p>	<p>Missed After the successful Proof of Concept test data transfer between HMRC and SDS in 2019, Scottish Government is seeking to enable regular feeds of this employment data from HMRC to SDS. A new data sharing application has been submitted to HMRC in order to progress accessing this individual level tax information on a regular basis. Costs involved for full implementation will be negotiated as part of this application.</p>
<p>AC15 Education Scotland will continue to provide support to improve the consistency and effectiveness of moderation of teachers' professional judgement further across the country.</p>	<p>Business as usual Education Scotland planned and delivered a National Programme of Moderation training for both practitioners and new Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs) throughout 19/20. This programme was paused from March 2020 onwards. NIF Officers have consulted with assessment coordinators and other stakeholders to inform plans for moderation 20/21.</p>
<p>AC17 A network of 21 Regional DYW Groups have been established to bridge the gap</p>	<p>Business as usual We are refreshing our approach to DYW in light of the impact of Covid-19 on the employability of young people, as part of a broader</p>

between employers and education. This network also links with the network of DYW local authority leads.	employability and skills offer through the Young Person's Guarantee. The DYW Groups will play a key role going forward.
AC18 We will ensure that nurseries in the most disadvantaged areas in Scotland benefit from an additional teacher or degree qualified early learning and childcare professional from August 2018.	Ongoing 435 additional teachers or graduates will be required to deliver the commitment, with all local authorities receiving at least 1 additional Full-Time Equivalent staffing resource. Equity and Excellence Leads provide graduate-level career progression opportunities in ELC and enable specialist pedagogy practice to be delivered within key settings and support wider professional development across the sector. The Equity and Excellence commitment is part of the expanding graduate Early Learning and Childcare workforce in Scotland. Local authorities reported in March 2020 that the vast majority – over 95% (418 full time equivalent posts) - of Equity and Excellence lead posts have been recruited since August 2018, with 30 local authorities reporting that they had recruited all the Equity and Excellence Lead posts in their areas at some point (even if the post-holder has since moved on). Since then, a further local authority has reported that they have recruited all the posts in their area at some point. The staff expansion required to deliver the extended ELC entitlement means that there has inevitably been staff movement within the sector as new managerial level posts are created. We expect this movement to settle down in time and to result in more stability in retention of Equity and Excellence Leads. We continue to seek regular updates from authorities and remain in contact with those facing specific challenges. The Scottish Government is working with the Care Inspectorate to understand how the policy is being implemented and whether Equity and Excellence Leads are being deployed in the best way for promoting quality of ELC and improving child outcomes. From September 2019, this included a specific focus area for the remainder of the inspection year to understand how Equity and Excellence Leads are being deployed in ELC settings in Scotland and assess what indications there are of early impact of Leads on: children's learning and wellbeing outcomes; family engagement and involvement in their child's learning; and practitioner skills. The Special Inspection Focus was paused due to Covid-19. We are drawing together the data collected to date alongside case studies of good practice in the work Leads have been doing, including during lockdown, into a progress report.
AC21 We will continue to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge authorities and schools and a number of national programmes, including staffing supply and capacity, professional learning and school leadership with £50 million per annum from the Attainment Scotland Fund.	Business as usual Up to £50m of funding was assigned to support nine Scottish Attainment Challenge Authorities and 73 individual schools on the Schools Programme. Each authority and school developed an annual improvement plan and report, tailored to their own circumstances, detailing the actions they will take to close the poverty related attainment gap and their impact. Events were held in November 2019 and November 2020 to allow networking, showcasing and challenge across the Schools Programme schools (see PI17 and PI18).
AC22 We will implement the Getting it Right for Looked After Children Strategy in full. We will take a tailored approach to young people who most need support, increasing positive destinations from	Ongoing As in previous years, it is important to respond to the needs of care experienced young people and the impact of trauma. There is no doubt that additional funding to schools, through Attainment Scotland Funding, including over £250m of Pupil Equity Funding in 2020/21 and 2021/22, means schools are better able to improve the

<p>school for looked after children by 4 percentage points per annum, resulting in parity by 2021.</p>	<p>way they support children and young people who have been impacted by ACEs and improve support around their mental and emotional health and wellbeing. More than £12m of Scottish Government funding was invested last year by local authorities to improve the attainment of care experienced children and young people. Projects as diverse as mentoring programmes and outdoor and play-based education were supported through the Care Experienced Children and Young People fund last academic year. Now more than £11.6m of further funding will be provided this academic year to enhance the support available. Local authorities' Chief Social Workers and Directors of Education will decide how this year's funding will be used. We continue to focus on improving the outcomes for those with care experience through Developing the Young Workforce, our youth employment strategy, and the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access. Additionally, the findings of, and response to, the Review of Implementation of Additional Support for Learning (due imminently) will be of relevance to ensure every child and young person who becomes looked after has the opportunity, where relevant, to have in place a focused plan to meet their learning needs and maximise the likelihood of achieving a positive destination.</p> <p>Underpinning these work packages, it will be important to view the support we provide to looked after children and young people in education settings through the lens of the Independent Care Review's findings as set out in "The Promise", published in February 2020. The Promise has set the challenge to us all to determine how we will work together in partnership, across national and local Government and beyond, to ensure we deliver for care experienced children and young people – and in a way which minimises the need for children, young people and families to require the support of a formal care system. To support early implementation, the Scottish Government has responded by investing an initial £4m in the Promise Partnership – a fund set up to deliver early, preventative, holistic family support based on the needs of children, young people and their families.</p> <p>In 2018/19, 71% of care experienced young people (looked after within the last year) and 93% of all school leavers were in a positive destination and we'll continue to work collaboratively to increase positive destinations for care experienced young people.</p>
<p>AC24 From January 2017 we will implement the Making Maths Count report recommendations to encourage greater enthusiasm for, and a greater understanding of, the value of mathematics amongst children and young people, their parents, carers and the wider public.</p>	<p>Ongoing To ensure improvement in maths, we are committed to continuing our implementation of the recommendations of the Making Maths Count report. The annual Maths Week Scotland, established in 2017, is promoting and celebrating maths. Its reach is expanding annually with children and young people in every local authority area in Scotland participating. Maths Week Scotland was successfully delivered digitally in 2020. The national thematic inspection report on numeracy and maths, published in December 2019, highlighted what is working well and where we require additional support and improvement. It confirms that our main strength is our teachers and their commitment to continuing improvement. Education Scotland's enhanced teams are working at local level on numeracy and maths, STEM and closing the poverty related attainment gap providing direct support to schools and local authorities on their local priorities. Over the past 6 years the Scottish Government has invested almost £2m in professional learning for numeracy and maths education.</p>

<p>AC25 We will drive forward the actions in our new Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy throughout 2017, with a view to delivering the Strategy's vision of using technology to improve attainment across the Curriculum in the next 3-5 years.</p>	<p>Ongoing Covid-19 sparked a huge increase in the uptake of digital learning across all Scotland's education settings. Glow user numbers and usage has increased dramatically as has the national support on offer to support teachers, learners and parents to adapt to the current context. That engagement with technology for learning has been mostly maintained into the new academic year. Scottish Government is considering how best to capitalise on this renewed and stronger focus on technology to ensure that all learners are able to fully benefit from technology enhanced education, now and into the future.</p>
<p>AC32 We will continue to provide, through the Developing the Young Workforce programme, more opportunities for young people to experience high quality, work-related learning, and to gain vocational qualifications. We will increase the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above year-on-year to 2020/21.</p>	<p>Ongoing The Scottish Government has committed to further expansion of college provision for school pupils, including Foundation Apprenticeships. There continues to be an annual increase in the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above. Data published in February 2020 showed 17.1% of 2018/19 school leavers attained 1+ award at SCQF 5 or better, this is an increase of 9.8 percentage points since the baseline in 2013/14.</p> <p>Since the two pathfinder years, Foundation Apprenticeship starts increased from 346 in 2016, to 1,244 in 2017 (239 schools, all local authorities and all 13 college regions), to 1,532 in 2018 (across 272 schools) and 3,445 in 2019 (across 325 schools). As of 1st October 2019, the Foundation Apprenticeships at SCQF Level 6 is now a recognised entry requirement by UK's university admission service (UCAS) for learners in Scotland applying to university.</p>
<p>AC39 Making clear our expectations of the SQA, including the importance of listening and being open to the voices of learners, teachers and parents. We will ensure that the Chair regularly reports to Ministers on the improvements being made in relation to these matters. We will request that SQA outline in their annual corporate plan their strategic communications and engagement plans.</p>	<p>Ongoing SQA's Corporate Plan for 2020-23, sets out the strategic direction for the next three years. A key element of the Corporate Plan is SQA's engagement with customers, stakeholders and staff around SQA's priorities and ways to improve the development and delivery of qualifications and services. One of the five outcomes in the Corporate Plan is 'We are flexible in meeting customer needs' with the need for good two-way engagement with customers. Taking this forward SQA will continue to work with stakeholders, including learners, teachers and parents, to support the development and delivery of its services. The Scottish Government engages regularly with SQA with frequent meetings between officials, DFM and the Chief Executive of SQA and DFM and the Chair. The Ministerial appointed Advisory Council reports annually to Scottish Ministers.</p>
<p>AC43 We will ensure that by 2030, students from the 20 per cent most deprived areas make up 20 per cent of higher education entrants.</p>	<p>Ongoing Implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access is being overseen by the Access Delivery Group, which is chaired by the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science. The Scottish Funding Council's University Outcome Agreement guidance has been updated to reflect the Government's targets for progress. HESA stats show 15.9% of Scottish domiciled full time first degree entrants to Scottish HEIs are from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland in 2018/19. This is only 0.1 percentage points away from our 2021 interim target.</p>
<p>AC48 We will be working collaboratively with partners across the education sector to actively explore what more we can do to encourage uptake of ELC /Further Education/Higher Education for the Gypsy/Traveller community</p>	<p>Paused (C-19) The Scottish Government launched a joint action plan Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers 2019-2021 on 9 October 2019. This includes a number of high level actions around education under the 'Improving access to Public Services' section. Due to Covid-19 and the focus that SG, Education Scotland and COSLA officials have had on recovery we have been unable to finalise a delivery plan to drive the actions. Officials along with STEP,</p>

	COSLA and Education Scotland are engaging to ensure that the delivery plan will be agreed and in place by April 2021.
AC53 We have also committed to recruiting an additional 250 school nurses by 2022.	Ongoing The first cohort of students commenced training in 2019/20 academic year. We are in discussion with Health Boards and Higher Education Institutions for the 2020/21 intake with the expectation that a further 50 students will commence training in this academic year.
AC56 Education Scotland will work with practitioners to develop and publish a professional learning resource that supports high quality play-based learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence by December 2019. This will feature existing good practice from across Scotland.	Complete Education Scotland worked with practitioners to create the resource. Work was taken forward to share practice, highlight the benefits of play pedagogy, and support self-evaluation. A framework to support settings to further develop their practice in this area was produced. The document was published in December 2019 and made available on the National Improvement Hub. The document can be found here: https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/early-level-play-pedagogy-toolkit/
AC57 Following the publication of the national strategy for school libraries in September 2018, an implementation group has been established. This group will begin implementation of the 20 action points in the strategy which are designed to support the improvement in literacy and numeracy, boost attainment across the curriculum, support health and wellbeing, foster inclusion, and enable opportunities for family learning. The group will meet 4 times in 2019, and the strategy will be implemented over the next five years.	Ongoing Progress continues against the objectives of the school library strategy, with a survey of school librarians showing that, pre Covid-19, 68% of respondents were delivering information literacy sessions, 68% were working closely with their support for learning department, and almost 76% were involved in work to foster the development of employability skills. Progress has been impeded by Covid-19 but School Library Improvement Fund project managers have shown resilience by adapting projects. School librarians have supported pupils and the wider school community by teaching via virtual library classes, promoting resources, writing on social media/blogs on reading for pleasure, using library websites to engage pupils with quizzes, book groups, newsletters, creative writing, book reviews, recommended reads and websites.
AC58 The Scottish Government will publish guidance for all early learning and childcare providers in December 2018 on how to access local outdoor space and how to set up an outdoor nursery experience. We have provided £860,000 of funding to Inspiring Scotland to work with eight local authorities to increase and improve their outdoor learning, which will include the establishment of two outdoor nurseries.	Ongoing Out to Play; practical guidance for creating outdoor play experiences in early learning and childcare (https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0054/00544754.pdf) was published on 21 Dec 2018. Hard copies of Out to Play have been distributed to all registered ELC and out of school care settings. Education Scotland are creating a page on the NIH to support this. Demand for the document from individual practitioners has been high, with very positive feedback, and so we are about to enter a second print run. Inspiring Scotland continue to work with the 8 local authorities with progress being reported quarterly and have agreed to widen their support to a number of additional local authorities.
AC61 A P1 practitioner forum has been established, led by Professor Sue Ellis. The forum is a place for engagement and discussion on the issues facing standardised assessments in a play based early years curriculum. It will provide insight and practical advice to teachers, schools and Scottish Government by May 2019. based early years curriculum. It will provide insight and practical advice.	Paused (C-19) The P1 Practitioner Forum held its first scheduled meeting of the 19/20 academic year in October 2019. This meeting focused on updating professionals on progress towards SNSA improvements and amendments and to share good practice. Unfortunately, subsequent scheduled meetings were postponed or cancelled due to adverse weather conditions then the impact of Covid-19. The P1 Practitioner Forum is expected to reconvene in 2021 once Covid-19 guidance from Scottish Government supports in-person meetings and gatherings. All practitioners have been updated on subsequent improvements to the P1 literacy assessment; including the shortening of the assessment, updated training specific to P1 available in webinar

	format, amended help and guidance within the SNSA platform and changes to SNSA descriptors to improve clarity.
AC67 A new Health and Wellbeing Census, covering children based in publicly funded schools from late primary through to secondary schools, will cover a wide range of topics and themes in relation to the Health and Wellbeing of children and young people. The first census will take place in the 2019/20 academic year, and every four years thereafter	Paused The planned 2019/20 HWB Census, with local authorities volunteered to become “early adopters” was suspended due to school closures as a result of COVID-19. The 2020/21 HWB Census is being undertaken with ‘volunteer’ local authorities, reflecting the ongoing COVID-related issues which may impact on schools’ capacity to undertake the HWB Census in 2020/21.
AC68 By August 2020, Education Scotland will prepare professional learning resources for school staff, based on the findings from the National Report	Complete The Numeracy and Mathematics PLR has been published and ES staff have started using it with practitioners.
AC71 The latest BISSR project is currently out to tender. It is anticipated that it will report towards the end of 2020 / early 2021.	Paused (C-19) Covid-19 has impacted on the delivery of this project. The contractor was appointed but was unable to undertake the field work in schools. It is now anticipated to be complete in October 2021.
AC72 Improve communications and engagement on national standardised assessment in Scotland and clarify key messages.	Paused (C-19) National standardised assessments: purpose and use was published in August 2019. Work with stakeholders on the development of a communications strategy on national standardised assessments was put on hold in March 2020 as a result of Covid-19. From 2018-19, all SNSA users receive regular information updates through direct e-mail from the Service Desk and are directed to the online Help, where appropriate, for guidance on new or improved content within the SNSA. Information access to the help and guidance sections of the SNSA have been improved through better signposting and re-drafting of information following direct user feedback. SNSA Reference Groups reflecting representative stakeholders are consulted on SNSA use and future improvement suggestions and information received from training sessions and the teacher survey is used to inform future developments. All developments are reported back to the profession through direct e-mail newsletters and within training programmes. Prior to Covid-19, consultation with stakeholders informed the re-procurement exercise for national standardised assessments. It is hoped that SNSA User Groups will reconvene in 2021 to continue to gather user feedback. In the meantime, opportunities will be explored to hold virtual consultation discussions with stakeholders.
AC73 Work with key partners to develop a practical framework and Code of Practice on the purpose and use of national standardised assessment data.	Business as usual The “Purpose and Use Statement”, developed in partnership with key stakeholders, summarised existing messages in training in addition to providing clearer specific guidance on aspects of practice which should be promoted (Dos) and those which required better understanding or should be avoided (Don’ts), was published to the profession in August 2019 through a range of communication channels. All new training materials included the “Purpose and Use Statement” and associated messaging and are subject to updates each year to reflect feedback from users. This is a continuing process.
AC74 Work with key partners to improve and enhance national standardised	Complete The “Purpose and Use Statement” was complemented by a series of updates, clarifications and enhancements within training

assessment guidance and support materials.	materials and approaches which included: increasing the number of training sessions offered; improving access to materials and messages through better signposting and easily obtainable, clearer written guidance; wider access to all training materials outwith the school day through their publication within Glow; and, in training negotiations with local authorities, promotion of reaching teachers and support staff yet to receive training of any type.
AC75 Enhance, expand and raise awareness of national standardised assessment professional learning opportunities	Complete In 2019/20, all training materials produced a menu of courses, written guidance and video support materials available to the profession, with each local authority provided with clear documentation covering training availability and choice. In session 2020/21, professionals will have access to additional guidance on Professional Development Pathways to improve understanding of progression through materials and how they are augmented with associated support resources. Professional development opportunities continue to be available in-person, as tutor-based (allowing local authorities to provide supplementary training offers using comprehensive materials) and interactive and recorded webinars to facilitate and retain safe, remote access to professional development courses.
AC76 Review and reflect on user feedback to enhance the SNSA for future years	Business as usual SNSA User Reviews were published in August 2018 and December 2019, each containing recommendations for future improvements to the SNSA. Many recommendations, for example clarifying item descriptions in reports, were taken forward in subsequent versions of the assessments. System and operational improvements and changes are informed by the Teacher Survey (available to all SNSA users online), feedback from training sessions (available to all attendees), focus groups of representative stakeholders, Learner Feedback (available to all learners presented with SNSA assessments) and wider information received through feedback to the SNSA Service Desk. User feedback has informed planning for the future versions of the SNSA and the associated training offer.
AC77 Continue to work with partners to enhance the Gaelic medium standardised assessments.	Paused (C-19) A staff user survey to obtain feedback in relation to the MCNG has been in place since January 2020 - a link is provided via the MCNG Platform, and Directors of Education and MCNG local authority outreach network representatives have been asked to encourage staff to share their views with us through it. Our user review work for the 2019/20 session has necessarily been put on hold due to Covid-19 and consequential need for practitioners to be able to focus on the immediate pressures of supporting children and young people, both in relation to remote learning, and then upon returning to school within the changed environment required. Our intention is to pick up user review work and stakeholder engagement early in 2021 - and on an entirely voluntary basis - by which time we hope practitioners and local authority staff will be more able to input to this work. We continue to welcome any and all feedback in the interim, and will gather and consider any views obtained via the online survey, MCNG training opportunities or wider Education Scotland outreach activity on an ongoing basis.
AC78 Revisit the 2014 review of the SSLN to assess the comparative burden and costs of conducting the SSLN and the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels data collection.	Ongoing Work on revisiting the 2014 review of the SSLN is nearing completion. This considers the statistical value of both the SSLN and ACEL and of the burden to produce each. The findings will be published on the Scottish Government website in due course.
AC79	Paused (C-19)

Work with key partners to assess and enhance the value of the national standardised assessments.	Plans to advance this area within the User Group consultation process were necessarily curtailed due to Covid-19 in 2019-20. The plans will be taken forward once stakeholder participants are in an improved position to contribute.
AC80 The government has commissioned an independent review of our Senior Phase. The purpose of the review will be to explore further how Curriculum for Excellence is being implemented for young people in S4-S6 across the country, and to identify any improvements that might be made.	Ongoing The OECD Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence will look at the Senior Phase curriculum and the Broad General Education (BGE) and the articulation between the two. The OECD Team have completed their engagement with national organisations and schools and have begun drafting their report, which will be published in June 2021. In August 2020 the Deputy First Minister asked the OECD to extend the remit of the Review to have a deeper focus on the future of student assessment and qualifications approaches in the Senior Phase curriculum in Scotland, based on best practice globally. This additional work will be aligned with the current OECD Review and the final comparative paper will be published later in the summer 2021, following the publication of the CfE Review Report.
AC81 Education Scotland will review the plan for regional and national moderation with the assessment co-ordinators and consult with assessment co-ordinators on the best way to embed moderation.	Complete NIF Officers consulted with assessment co-ordinators and agreed a plan for regional and national moderation. National moderation events, the QAMSO programme and bespoke regional moderation events were delivered to practitioners from October 2019 until March 2020.
AC82 Education Scotland will work with stakeholders to review the collection of NIF qualitative and quantitative data, and create guidance to support the collection of data.	Complete Consultation was carried out, and completed, to review and create a more focused NIF return to elicit information around the six NIF drivers. Regular consultation took place with ADES and guidance was produced. However, in light of Covid-19, the NIF return was streamlined to reflect the current context and the focus of the four priorities was agreed for the NIF return, in place of the NIF drivers. Both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered and the NIF Report devised.
AC83 The Scottish Government will engage with the Scottish Qualifications Authorities in their work to ensure that LfS-related content is considered when SQA national qualifications are being periodically reviewed	Complete A specific action has been agreed with the SQA and is included within the Learning for Sustainability Action Plan: 'The SQA, in partnership with Education Scotland and other organisations, will develop new LfS qualifications and pathways where appropriate'. Education Scotland is now working with the SQA to ensure that it is accrediting new LfS qualifications and awards where appropriate.
AC84 The Scottish Government will engage with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership in their work to i) identify LfS-focused qualifications and awards in that are already recognised on the SCQF framework, and ii) identify any further awards that could be recognised. This will ensure that the criteria are developed by which credit rating bodies can define whether their qualifications or awards are "LfS-relevant".	Complete A piece of work undertaken and completed by the SCQF now enables Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) and Programme Owners to identify where qualifications/programmes on the SCQF have a focus on or include sustainability content/themes, and it also enables the SCQF Partnership to produce reports from the SCQF database for interested parties.
AC85 Developing resources and support for schools to address gender based violence and sexual harassment.	Paused (C-19) Prior to Covid-19 a Working Group had been established and had begun to formulate an action plan. Covid-19 has delayed this work, however this has been picked up again in August and the group is focused on specific actions to strengthen resources for schools.
AC86	Paused (C-19)

Developing updated guidance on Healthy Eating in Schools – to mirror the updated regulations on food and drink in schools.	Prior to Covid-19 a Working Group was established to revise the current guidance. The Working Group consisted of local authority representatives so had to be put on hold as a result of Covid-19. A virtual working group convened in July 2020 to inform further development of the guidance. The aim is to produce the guidance by February 2021, to support local authority catering teams plan for the introduction of the amended school food and nutrition regulations in April 2021.
AC87 Developing a new mental health first aid training resource for all school staff.	Paused (C-19) Prior to Covid-19 a Working Group was established. The Working Group informed the development of a specification for the new online training resource. A contractor has been appointed to develop the online resource which is expected to be available by Spring 2021.
School improvement	
SI11 We are also exploring options through UK legislation to enable the sharing of data by DWP and HMRC to allow local authorities to identify eligible families. This should assist with increasing registrations of ELC for 2 year olds.	Ongoing The Scottish Government continues to work with the UK Government to scope the necessary legislative and practical data-sharing arrangements to allow councils to access information on families with eligible two-year-olds. This is currently subject to UK Government and UK Parliament timescales.
SI26 Working with Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to develop a single shared inspection model for early learning and childcare and a commitment that each institution will only be subject to a single inspection per cycle.	Superseded Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Government have agreed to defer further development of a single shared inspection model for early learning and childcare (ELC) until after the expansion of funded ELC has been fully implemented.
SI28 Developing an approach to funding that truly empowers schools, and provides the framework of support which schools need, based on the outcome of the consultation.	Ongoing New revised Devolved School Management guidance, co-produced with local government, was published in June 2019. Local authorities have been working to implement this guidance, which requires them to prepare revised Devolved School Management Schemes for their own authority. These new schemes are due to be in place by April 2021. Although all local authorities have made good progress, with some having published new schemes already, some have had Covid-19 related challenges in progressing reviews. In partnership with ADES Resources and COSLA, update information is now being gathered from local authorities, to assess whether an extension to the April 2021 deadline could be considered.
SI29 Around a quarter of 2 year olds are now eligible for funded ELC through the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and through subsequent secondary legislation which commenced in August 2015. There is now a dedicated national project on the 2 year old offer within the Scottish Government expansion programme to provide support to local authorities and make links across the programme. The programme will last up to, and beyond, August 2020. We aim to improve uptake by ensuring the 2 year old offer is appropriate and appealing for eligible children and their families.	Ongoing Work to promote awareness and increase uptake of the 2 year old offer is well underway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to work with local government to extend access to funded ELC to 2 year olds with a care experienced parent. This will be brought in alongside the new implementation date for 1140. • We are working with UK Government to establish a legal gateway to allow for data of eligible families to be shared with local authorities. • We are collating and disseminating the work of 9 multi-agency improvement teams who worked with CYPIC between 2018 and 2019 on improving uptake and addressing barriers to the offer in their areas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are working across SG to ensure we are making the most of cross/joint messaging e.g. with those eligible for Best Start Foods and who may access the Money Talks Team. We have created content on the Parent Club website that has been messaged tested with the parents of eligible 2 year olds in mind. We are developing online spaces to help all those with an interest in eligible 2s across Scotland to share best practice and guidance relevant to 2 year olds in ELC.
SI30 Education Scotland will continue to provide support to the RICs	Business as usual Education Scotland delivered a series of events in Local Authorities and in RICs on assessment and moderation delivering key messages for improvement and sharing good practice. In addition to working with their link local authorities, Attainment Advisors have begun to support appropriate regional collaborative plans where there is a focus on equity. This is enabling wider sharing of their expertise.
SI31 Implement the Early Learning and Childcare Quality Action Plan	Ongoing 11 of the 15 actions in the ELC Quality Action Plan have now been delivered with the remaining well underway. Actions that have been delivered include: publication of a national induction resource; development of directory of continuous professional learning opportunities; a learning and development course for school leadership teams on what drives quality in early learning and childcare; and strengthening of the ELC content on the Education Scotland National Improvement Hub.
SI63 Working in partnership with local government, Regional Improvement Collaboratives and Education Scotland, ensure that our education empowerment reforms strengthen and support collaborative working across the system. This includes extending the reach, accessibility and impact of collaborative working across school, local, regional and national levels. These reforms are vital to strengthening Scotland's Curriculum through teachers and headteachers being empowered and supported to collaborate and share innovation and best practice in implementing the curriculum for their learners.	Ongoing Regional Improvement Collaboratives re-prioritised their work programme to directly support schools and staff dealing with the impacts of Covid-19. This included enhanced support for virtual learning platforms and professional learning networks, and redeploying staff to support front-line remote learning activities.
SI64 Alongside COSLA we are currently in the process of commissioning external research into the establishment, reach and impact of Regional Improvement Collaboratives. This follows an interim review of RICs published in February 2019 and is scheduled to report by June 2020. Findings will be used to take steps to further embed regional collaboration and the support available to schools	Paused (C-19) Research and fieldwork commenced in early 2020 but was paused in response to Covid-19. The Scottish Government, COSLA and the Research Advisory Group for this review are considering options for re-commencing this research in 2021.
SI65 Education Scotland will collate this information from inspection reports, the data gathering exercise (section 12 undertaken in collaboration with DYW), NIF reports, Foundation Apprenticeship	Complete HM Inspectors have completed the following briefings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection findings 2018-19: Developing the Young Workforce. This briefing outlines key findings from inspections across early learning and childcare, primary, special and secondary schools. It provides examples of highly effective practice.

data, Senior Phase review, secondary HT survey and work in relation to the Curriculum Refresh Narrative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary Inspection findings: Secondary Curriculum 2016-2019. This briefing provides a summary of inspection findings on the quality of the secondary curriculum to support and promote improvement over a three year period. <p>Both these briefings have been provided as evidence to the OECD as part of the curriculum review.</p> <p>HM Inspectors have completed phase one of the review of foundation apprenticeships.</p>
SI66 HM Inspectors of Education will publish a thematic inspection report focusing on highly effective practice in using assessment within the BGE to improve learning and teaching. The report will be published in January 2020.	Complete Assessment within the broad general education, a thematic inspection was published on 17 March 2020. This report shares examples of settings and schools who are making highly effective use of assessment to improve children's and young people's learning.
SI67 Scottish Government will work with partners to implement the 16 recommendations from the Review of Personal and Social Education (published Jan 2019) during the course of 2019. This will include the establishment of a senior phase Personal and Social Education Mentoring Programme to coach and enable pupils to design and deliver aspects of health and wellbeing / personal and social education whilst working towards an award.	Paused (C-19) Steady progress continued to be made on the implementation of the PSE Review recommendations, however Covid-19 impacted on progress. This work recommenced in August 2020 and is not expected to be completed until Autumn 2021.
SI68 During 2020 the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and partners will continue to implement the Developing the Young Workforce reforms. This will include promotion of the new standards for careers education and work placements.	Complete Standards for career education and work placements have been published and continue to be promoted. They provide universal entitlements and place responsibilities on all partners to address equality issues.
SI69 A review will be undertaken of Foundation Apprenticeships, with an evaluation of the Developing the Young Workforce programme as a whole reporting after the conclusion of the programme in 2021.	Ongoing The Scottish Government and its agencies are fully committed to provide ongoing support to achieve the system change necessary to embed Foundation Apprenticeships in the senior phase curriculum and have commissioned Education Scotland to undertake a review of the programme. This review is currently being progressed with the intention that the outcome will inform and enhance delivery of FAs going forward.
SI70 Education Scotland will take forward a Communication and Engagement plan for the Refreshed Narrative on Scotland's Curriculum. They will work with partners across the education system to ensure that teachers can engage with its principles as part of their curriculum development activity.	Ongoing Education Scotland facilitated and chaired the first two meetings of the Communications and Engagement partnership group, drawn from the members of Curriculum and Assessment Board. The group has not met since Covid-19 restrictions came into operation, and so the joint plan is therefore not yet in place. In the meantime Education Scotland have led sessions to support thinking around curriculum design. These have taken a range of forms, from direct engagement with schools around the four capacities and contexts, to national engagement sessions where practitioners have come together to work collaboratively around the themes of IDI and Learner Pathways. These sessions have included close partnership working with a design agency and a range of national partners. Work is ongoing to consider how this support to schools

	can be developed throughout a recovery curriculum, with focus on building capacity across local areas and building digital sustainability to best meet the needs of all young people.
SI71 In early 2020 there will be a review of the Senior Phase of Scotland's Curriculum. It is anticipated that this will take account of the link between the Broad General Education (ie the experience in S1 – S3) and the Senior Phase as well as subject choice	Superseded This review has been incorporated into the OECD Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence (AC80).
SI72 During 2020, the Scottish Government will involve children and young people in the development of a learner focused guide to Scotland's Curriculum to accompany the Refreshed Narrative for practitioners. This work will incorporate the key thinking points from the Learner Panel report on subject choices, assessment and personalised guidance.	Paused (C-19) This work was put on hold due to Covid-19. In its place, the Scottish Government is funding the Scottish Learner Panel to continue to meet up to end June 2021, and to focus on Covid-19 education recovery. The new education recovery panel of 15 children and young people, ages 9 to 18 will focus on Covid-19 related education issues. Young Scot will support the panel to meet on a monthly basis, feeding directly in to the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group.
SI73 During 2020, Education Scotland will ensure that ES officers in regional improvement team are aware of the key benefits of outdoor learning and its importance within the curriculum.	Ongoing A Learning Week session on outdoor learning and learning for sustainability was offered to all regional Education Scotland staff and HMI colleagues in November 2019. Education Scotland is currently running an extended programme of online webinars on outdoor learning involving a wide variety of teams and regional improvement advisers.
SI74 The Young STEM Leader programme will continue to be supported in 2020, which includes a Youth Steering Group to represent the voice of young people.	Ongoing Over 600 Young STEM leaders took part in the pilot phase of this programme up to October 2020, including through online engagement during the pandemic. Their achievements were celebrated as part of a formal launch of the programme in October 2020. It is now available to all schools and we hope to see it continue to grow in 2021-22.
SI75 During 2020, learner voice and participation will continue to form a key aspect within the School Empowerment reforms. Scottish Government and Education Scotland will raise awareness of new guidance on Learner Empowerment and will work with learners to develop further support materials on learner empowerment during the course of 2020.	Paused (C-19) This work was put on hold due to Covid-19. In its place, the Scottish Government is funding the Scottish Learner Panel to continue to meet up to end June 2021, and to focus on Covid-19 education recovery. The new education recovery panel of 15 children and young people, ages 9 to 18 will focus on Covid-19 related education issues. Young Scot will support the panel to meet on a monthly basis, feeding directly in to the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group.
SI76 During 2020, the Scottish Government will continue to support the Scottish Learner Panel, ensuring that pupils can contribute to policy development.	Ongoing The Scottish Government is funding the Scottish Learner Panel to continue to meet up to end June 2021, and to focus on Covid-19 education recovery. The new education recovery panel of 15 children and young people, ages 9 to 18 will focus on Covid-19 related education issues. Young Scot will support the panel to meet on a monthly basis, feeding directly in to the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG). In addition, a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament attends meetings of CERG and will act as a bridge between the panel and CERG meetings. Further bespoke "ad hoc" panels of learners met with the Deputy First Minister in June 2020 (to discuss experience of school closures); and in August and September 2020 (to discuss SQA examinations).

	Learners were consulted in the work of the review by Professor Mark Priestley and the OECD review of Scottish education.
SI77 By the end of 2020, Education Scotland will roll out the Young Leaders of Learning Programme (previously piloted in north-east Scotland) across Scotland. This will help to support more children to be involved in self-evaluation activities and reciprocal visits to other schools as part of school improvement activities in their own school.	Paused (C-19) This programme was progressing well, involving more than 50 schools in the Northern Alliance. Feedback was very positive, with head teachers and pupils reporting improvements in confidence, social skills, organisation and other core skills. All participating schools included actions from pupils in to their school improvement plans. However, the national launch event in March was suspended due to Covid-19, and currently children cannot visit each other's schools. The programme will restart once restrictions are eased.
SI78 During 2020, Education Scotland will continue to develop professional learning opportunities to support the Education Scotland Learner Participation 3-18 resource.	Business as usual Sessions have been delivered in 4 local authorities in the Northern Alliance, and were positively evaluated, with teachers having a clearer idea about how to involve pupils in decision making in their schools, learning and communities. A digital delivery twilight version is now being developed and offered, initially in the north.
SI79 Education Scotland will refresh the Education Scotland "Recognising and Realising Children's Rights" resource and professional learning resource by the end of 2020.	Complete This programme has now been developed to run as a series of 4 twilights which can also be delivered remotely. A trial in the Northern Alliance took place in November 2020 facilitated by ES and local authority colleagues. The feedback from the trial was very positive averaging a score of 4.25/5 from participants.
Performance information	
PI02 From February 2017, we will roll out training in the use of the standardised assessment tool to equip teachers with the necessary data literacy skills to identify areas for improvement.	Business as usual SNSA training was rolled out in January 2017, with MCNG training rolled out in August 2018. This training remains available to users on an ongoing basis.
PI12 The suite of Professional Standards managed by the GTCS are currently being revised and both digital and data literacy will be given greater prominence in revised versions to be published in 2020.	Complete The suite of Professional Standards managed by the GTCS which have been refreshed and come into effect for the 21/22 academic year now give greater prominence to digital and data literacy.
PI16 Early work is underway on a long-term project to develop a new index of social background, which is aimed at creating individual level data (as opposed to area-based) which allow more targeted and effective intervention for disadvantaged pupils.	Ongoing Further exploration has uncovered significant challenges in obtaining suitable individual-level DWP/ HMRC data, which requires reconsideration of the feasibility of this project; SG Analysts continue to explore potential alternative options.
PI17 In 2019/2020 we will continue to administer the Challenge Authority, Schools Programme, Care Experienced Children and Young People and Pupil Equity funds as well as the National Programmes, supporting Schools, Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations to close the poverty related attainment gap with up to £182m from the Attainment Scotland Fund.	Ongoing Over £182m of funding was issued during 2019-20 from the Attainment Scotland Fund across all 32 Local Authorities, schools and a range of third sector organisations. Each authority and school develops annual improvement plans and reports, tailored to their own circumstances, detailing the actions they will take to close the poverty-related attainment gap, and their impact. In light of Covid-19, and the impact on some of the most vulnerable children and families, additional flexibility was introduced to the 2020-21 Attainment Scotland Funding, allowing councils and schools to redirect these funds provided that all spend remained aligned to the core principles of the programme. In May 2020, the Deputy First Minister confirmed Pupil Equity Funding for two years ahead -

	2020/21 and 2021/22. This equates to more than £250 million, and will be made available to 97% of schools over those two years.
<p>PI18</p> <p>For the remainder of this parliament the Scottish Government and Education Scotland will continue to work in partnership with local authorities, schools and other key stakeholders to facilitate, broker and support action to maximise progress in reducing the poverty related attainment gap. A five point maximising progress plan has been jointly developed by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to facilitate this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise and tailored additional support will be targeted where the latest evidence shows that the pace of progress could be increased. • Every school and every teacher will have access to, and understand, what the data and evidence says and have the skills to use this to improve children and young people's learning, progress and achievement. • Specific approaches which are making the biggest impact in improving children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing will be identified and shared systematically. • We will work with teachers and schools to enhance their professional practice by empowering them to develop sustainable approaches to improvement, and ensure lasting impact for children and young people affected by poverty. • Working together at national, regional and local level, we will increase our collective efforts across all levels of government and build on the momentum of empowerment and collaboration, to identify, take responsibility for, and tackle the causes of the attainment gap at all levels. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The collective skills and expertise of Attainment Advisors working with others across Education Scotland has supported schools and local authorities over session 2020/21 to continue to maximise progress with closing the poverty related attainment gap within the context of Covid-19 educational recovery.</p> <p>In response to Covid-19, we introduced additional flexibility to the Attainment Scotland funding, ensuring councils and schools can redirect this to help mitigate the impact of school closures on our most disadvantaged families. This has enabled the provision of tablets to support digital learning at home and support for home-school link workers to maintain regular contact with children.</p> <p>It also supported the delivery of summer learning and support programmes, including family support workers, free food and additional learning materials.</p> <p>The Attainment Scotland Funding Flexibility Guidance and revised PEF Guidance we have issued to local authorities and headteachers was clear that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any flexibility must remain consistent with the principle of equity in education. • Any decisions that alter the planned use of Pupil Equity Funding should be made in partnership with the relevant headteachers. • Headteachers must have access to the full amount of the allocated Pupil Equity Funding. • Headteachers should work in partnership with each other, and their local authority, to agree the use of the funding. <p>Education Scotland Attainment Advisors remain available to provide support and advice, so local authorities and headteachers should continue to engage with them where necessary.</p> <p>In addition, an Education Recovery working group was established on Supporting Learners from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, with representatives from across the Education Sector. This culminated in input to the "Continuity in learning Guidance" and ensuring the needs of disadvantaged learners were a key consideration.</p>
<p>PI19</p> <p>Research and development work will continue around the three aims of the Research Strategy.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Two Research Strategy reports were published in 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 4 Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation report • PISA 2018 Global Competence report on Scotland's results <p>Some projects were paused in 2020 as a result of Covid-19; these are currently scheduled to restart in 2021</p>

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Empowering Schools: education reform progress update <https://www.gov.scot/publications/empowering-schools-education-reform-progress-update/>

Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellence and Equity – a governance review

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/empowering-teachers-parents-communities-achieve-excellence-equity-education-governance-review/>

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Family Learning Framework – Advice for Practitioners [Family Learning Framework](#) | [Practice exemplars](#) | [National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Food and drink in schools consultation analysis report

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/report-responses-consultation-nutritional-requirements-food-drink-schools/>

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Growing Up in Scotland: Father-child relationships and child socio-emotional wellbeing

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