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Renfrewshire Council

Notice of Meeting and Agenda
Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 20 May 2021	13:00	Teams meeting,

KENNETH GRAHAM
Head of Corporate Governance

Membership

Ms Mary Jane Bird: Mr Jack Nellaney: Mr Ravinder Singh: Councillor Audrey Doig: Councillor Edward Grady: Councillor Neill Graham: Councillor Jim Harte: Councillor John Hood: Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes: Councillor Karen Kennedy: Councillor Scott Kerr: Councillor John McNaughtan: Councillor Will Mylet: Councillor Iain Nicolson: Councillor Emma Rodden: Councillor John Shaw: Councillor Jane Strang:

Councillor Jim Paterson (Convener): Provost Lorraine Cameron (Depute Convener):

Recording of Meeting

This meeting will be recorded for subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site. If you have any queries regarding this please contact Committee Services on democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk. To find the recording please follow the link which will be attached to this agenda once the meeting has concluded. https://youtu.be/_Q93sHreUx8

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

Finance

1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report **5 - 12**

Joint Report by Directors of Finance & Resources and Children's Services

Service Update and Performance Planning

2 Children's Services Health Safety and Well Being Strategy 2019-2022 Update **13 - 24**

Report by Director of Children's Services

3 Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2020/21 Outturn Report **25 - 56**

Report by Director of Children's Services

4 West Partnership Improvement Collaborative: Interim Improvement Plan **57 - 72**

Report by Director of Children's Services

Education

5 Mid-year Scottish Attainment Challenge Report **73 - 100**

Report by Director of Children's Services

6	**Scottish Attainment Challenge Impact Report 2015-2020** Report by Director of Children's Services	**101 - 214**
7	**Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Education Establishments** Report by Director of Children's Services	**215 - 218**
8	**SQA Alternative Certification Model** Report by Director of Children's Services	**219 - 248**
9	**School Holiday Arrangements School Session 2022-2023** Report by Director of Children's Services	**249 - 256**

Children and Families

10	**Age of Criminal Responsibility Act** Report by Director of Children's Services	**257 - 262**
11	**The National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Project** Report by Director of Children's Services	**263 - 268**
12	**Keeping Brother and Sisters Together** Report by Director of Children's Services	**269 - 296**

Renfrewshire Council

To:	**Education and Children's Services Policy Board**
On:	**20 May 2021**
Report by:	**Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Children's Services**
Heading:	**Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 5 March 2021**

1. Summary of Financial Position

1.1 The projected Revenue outturn at 31 March 2021 for Children's Services is an underspend of £0.094m (<0.1%) against the revised budget for the year as outlined in the detailed tables following in the remainder of this report. This position is possible through applying flexibility within specific grant funding as permitted by the Scottish Government in order to address the extraordinary costs incurred in response to the Covid19 pandemic.

1.2 The projected Capital outturn at 31 March 2021 for Children's Services is a breakeven position, against the revised budget for the year. This is summarised over the relevant service in the table below and further analysis is provided in the Appendices.

1.3 For the financial year 2020/21, the projected outturn position is split into Core (or business as usual) and COVID-19 related variances to help readers understand the impact of the pandemic on service finances.

Table 1: Revenue

Division	Revised Annual Budget £000	Projected Outturn Core £000	Projected Outturn COVID-19 £000	Total Projected Outturn £000	Budget Variance £000	Budget Variance %
Children's Services	£215,587	£212,862	£2,631	**£215,493**	£94	<0.1%

Table 2: Capital

Division	Revised Annual Budget £000	Projected Outturn Core £000	Projected Outturn COVID-19 £000	Total Projected Outturn £000	Budget Variance £000	Budget Variance %
Children's Services	£9,947	£9,947	£0	**£9,947**	£0	0%

2. Recommendations

Members are requested to:

2.1 Note the projected Revenue outturn position for Children's Services detailed in Table 1 above, and further note that the forecast position is based on best estimates and confirmed government support at this point in time. The service will continue to apply the flexibility within specific grant funding permitted by the Scottish Government in order to achieve a breakeven revenue outturn position.

2.2 Note projected Capital outturn position for Children's Services detailed in Table 2 above; and

2.3 Note the budget adjustments detailed in sections 4 and 6.

3. Children's Services Revenue

3.1. The Revenue Budget Monitoring report at Appendix 1 identifies a projected annual underspend of £0.094m (<0.1% of total budget). Detailed division service reports can be found in Appendix 2, along with an explanation of each significant projected variance.

3.2. The projected outturn is based on information available and assumptions made by service budget holders as at 5 March 2021.

3.3. The main reasons for the projected outturn position are indicated within the objective analysis at Appendix 2.

4. Revenue Budget Adjustments

4.1. Members are requested to note from Appendix 1 that budget adjustments totalling £0.586m have been processed since the last report. These related to a grant received from the Scottish Government for Children and Young Persons' Mental Health and Wellbeing arising from Covid-19 and to transfers from Tackling Poverty programme in relation to Families First.

5. Children's Services Capital

5.1. The Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 was approved by the Council on 9th March 2020.

5.2. The Capital Monitoring report at Appendix 3 indicates changes totalling £0.652m in the approved capital programme for Education and Children's Services since the last report. This relates to additional funding for Early Years and revised cash flows.

5.3. Further detail, including reasons for significant variances, can be found at Appendix 3.

6. Capital Budget Adjustments

6.1. There have been budget changes totalling £0.652m since the last report:

Budget increase in 2020-21 (£0.625m):

- Early Years 1,140 Expansion (£0.023m) funded by Contribution from Current Revenue (CFCR) for extension at St Catherine's;
- Digital Inclusion (£0.602m) for grant awarded by Scottish Government for ICT equipment to provide access to learning for pupils home schooled during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Budget carried forward from 2020-21 to 2021-22 (£1.342m):

- Early Years 1,140 Expansion (£0.947m) for revised cash flows received for the project;
- SEMP (£0.350m) due to cash flow timings and expected underspends related to the project;
- Other School Investment (£0.046m) due to expected underspend within the John Ogilvie extension project.

Budget brought forward from 2021-22 to 2020-21 (£0.065m):

- SEMP 2020 (£0.065m) for costs related to the site of the new build campus

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Implications of this report

1. Financial

The projected budget outturn position for Children's Services' Revenue budget is an underspend of £0.094m, or breakeven based on use of flexibilities within specific grant funding as permitted by the Scottish Government Income and expenditure will continue to be monitored closely for the rest of the financial year.

The projected outturn position for Children's Services' Capital budget is a breakeven position. The Capital programme will continue to be monitored closely for the rest of the financial year.

Any changes to current projections in either Revenue or Capital budgets will be reported to the board as early as possible, along with an explanation for the movement.

2. HR and Organisational Development

None directly arising from this report.

3. Community/Council Planning

None directly arising from this report.

4. Legal
None directly arising from this report.

5. Property/Assets
None directly arising from this report.

6. Information Technology
None directly arising from this report.

7. Equality and Human Rights
The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety
None directly arising from this report.

9. Procurement
None directly arising from this report.

10. Risk
The potential risk that the Council will overspend its approved budgets for the year will be managed at a Council-wide level by the Chief Executive and Directors.

11. Privacy Impact
None directly arising from this report.

12. Cosla Policy Position
N/a.

13. Climate Risk
None directly arising from this report.

List of Background Papers: None

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RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2020/21
1st April to 5th March 2021

POLICY BOARD : EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Subjective Summary	Revised Annual Budget at Period 10	New Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Projected Outturn Core Business	Projected Outturn COVID-19	Total Projected Outturn	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Previous Projected Outturn Variance	Movement
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Employees	154,613	3,513	158,126	155,494	1,383	156,877	1,249	0.8%	943	306
Premises Related	9,235	77	9,312	9,869	245	10,114	(802)	(8.6%)	(517)	(285)
Transport Related	4,469	(3)	4,466	5,004	(125)	4,879	(413)	(9.2%)	(405)	(8)
Supplies and Services	30,170	(4,191)	25,979	25,558	443	26,001	(22)	(0.1%)	(16)	(6)
Third Party Payments	14,044	286	14,330	13,919	1,063	14,982	(652)	(4.5%)	(701)	49
Transfer Payments	13,091	706	13,797	13,426	210	13,636	161	1.2%	128	33
Support Services	208	(7)	201	205	0	205	(4)	(2.0%)	(57)	53
Depreciation and Impairment Losses	0	293	293			0	293	100.0%	0	293
GROSS EXPENDITURE	**225,830**	**674**	**226,504**	**223,475**	**3,219**	**226,694**	**(190)**	**(0.1%)**	**(625)**	**435**
Income	(10,829)	(88)	(10,917)	(10,613)	(588)	(11,201)	284	2.6%	489	(205)
NET EXPENDITURE	**215,001**	**586**	**215,587**	**212,862**	**2,631**	**215,493**	**94**	**0.0%**	**(134)**	**229**

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2020/21
1st April to 5th March 2021

POLICY BOARD : EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Objective Summary	Revised Annual Budget at Period 10	New Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Projected Outturn Core Business	Projected Outturn COVID-19	Total Projected Outturn	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Previous Projected Outturn Variance	Movement
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Directorate	605	(1)	604	604	0	604	0	0.0%	0	0
Early learning and childcare	32,954	274	33,228	29,197	553	29,750	3,478	10.5%	3,478	0
Primary	52,788	441	53,229	54,159	1,309	55,468	(2,239)	(4.2%)	(2,166)	(74)
Secondary	74,678	(433)	74,245	74,884	330	75,214	(969)	(1.3%)	(797)	(171)
ASN (Special) Schools	6,257	1	6,258	6,393	3	6,396	(138)	(2.2%)	(358)	220
Additional support for learning (ASL)	14,739	(1)	14,738	14,469	(338)	14,131	607	4.1%	377	230
Psychological services	730	8	738	760	0	760	(22)	(3.0%)	(26)	4
Education development	1,574	(13)	1,561	1,506	0	1,506	55	3.5%	48	7
Attainment Challenge	(809)	(6)	(815)	(815)	0	(815)	0	0.0%	0	0
Facilities management	563	(26)	537	639	23	662	(125)	(23.3%)	(125)	0
Child care	30,922	342	31,264	31,066	751	31,817	(553)	(1.8%)	(566)	13
NET EXPENDITURE	**215,001**	**586**	**215,587**	**212,862**	**2,631**	**215,493**	**94**	**0.0%**	**(135)**	**229**

Objective Heading	Key Reasons for Projected Variance
Early Learning and Childcare	Underspend in 1140 expansion programme due to delayed opening of new facilities.
Primary Schools	Primary Overspend in staffing, due to retention of temporary teachers and provision of childcare hubs during lockdown period, additional property costs and PPE costs, offset by grant from Scottish Government for recruitment of additional teachers.
Secondary Schools	Overspend in staffing, due to retention of temporary teachers, additional property costs and PPE costs, , offset by grant from Scottish Government for recruitment of additional teachers.
ASN Schools	Overspend mainly due to staffing costs.
Additional Support for Learning	Underspend in staffing costs and day placements.
Psychological Services	Overspend in staffing costs.
Education Development	Underspend in transfer payments, across various projects.
Facilities Management	Overspend in staffing costs due to catchment review and additional Occupational Health costs due to Covid19.
Children & Families	Overspend in Residential Schools due to Covid19 related placement costs, Residential Staffing costs and PPE. The movement is due to anticipated Scottish Government funding to partially offset Covid-19 expenditure.

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY - NON-HOUSING SERVICES
1st April to 5th March 2021
POLICY BOARD: EDUCATION & CHILDEN'S SERVICES

		Current Year 2020-21						Full Programme - All years			
Project Title	Prior Years Expenditure to 31/03/2020* £000	Approved Budget 2020-21 £000	Budget Adjustments in 2020-21 £000	Revised Budget 2020-21 £000	Projected Outturn 2020-21 £000	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Total Approved Budget to 31-Mar-25 £000	Projected Outurn to 31-Mar-25 £000	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable	
EDUCATION & CHILDREN SERVICES											
Early Years 1,140 Hours Expansion	2,528	9,175	(1,013)	8,162	8,162	0	0%	14,800	14,800	0	0%
Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP)	41,576	495	215	710	710	0	0%	42,998	42,898	100	0%
Schools Estate Programme (SEMP 2020)	61	1,317	(1,252)	65	65	0	0%	51,850	51,850	0	0%
Other Schools Investment Programmes	19,793	2,340	(2,333)	7	7	0	0%	22,852	22,552	300	1%
Digital Inclusion	0	0	603	603	603	0	0%	603	603	0	0%
Technology Replacement Strategy ICT	0	400	0	400	400	0	0%	2,000	2,000	0	0%
TOTAL EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD	63,958	13,727	(3,780)	9,947	9,947	0	0%	135,103	134,703	400	0%

*Rolling programmes have a prior year year expenditure of £0 as the expenditure is not directly linked from one year to the next as a singular project.

Objective Heading	Key Reasons for Projected Variance
Early Years 1,140 Hours Expansion	
Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP)	Minor underspends on St Paul and St Fergus primary investment projects will be transferred to the SEMP 2020 programme on final completion
Schools Estate Programme (SEMP 2020)	
Other Schools Investment Programmes	On completion of remedial works at Riverbrae School the anticipated underspend will be transferred to the SEMP 2020 programme
Technology Replacement Strategy ICT	

Renfrewshire Council

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Plan 2019-2022 Update for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021**

1. Summary

1.1. The council's health and safety strategy places a responsibility on each service to prepare an annual report evaluating the management of health and safety within the service.

1.2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the annual update of the Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy for year 2019/2020 was delayed. This is attached for information as Appendix 1.

1.3. The Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy 2020/21 update is attached as Appendix 2. This sets out the arrangements for the management of health and safety within the service and demonstrates the service's commitment to continuous improvement in health and safety performances summarising the achievements to March 2021 for Children's Services.

1.4. Children's services have a proactive approach to health and safety. This is evidenced by the attainment of accreditation and certification to BS OHSAS 18001:2007 with recommendation that the registration be continued. The standard measures the suitability and effectiveness of the service's occupational health and safety management systems.

1.5. There is currently a process whereby, in the event of an incident occurring that triggers a Duty of Candour notification, staff have a duty to report this to the Head of Schools, who has the responsibility for ensuring that the Duty of Candour procedure is followed. Where required, the Care Inspectorate will be notified.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The education and children's services policy board is asked to:

i) Note the progress of Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy 2019/2022

ii) Note the progress of Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy 2020/2021

iii) Approve the inclusion of Duty of Candour Incidents process, in the Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy 2019-2022

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3. Background

3.1 The Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board on 14 November 2018, approved the Council Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2019/2022.

3.2 The council health and safety strategy requires each council service to maintain its own health and safety strategy.

3.3 In line with council policy, health and safety policies are required as a minimum, to be reviewed and updated every 3 years or following significant changes in a service.

3.4 Children's Services policy has been revised to reflect standard health and safety industry guidance on effective policies which set a clear direction for the service to follow.

3.5 The service health and safety policy sets out the organisation of, and responsibilities for, health and safety within the service and provides details of the arrangements made for the service to meet its legal obligations.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

Continuing to improve health and safety performance will reduce accidents / occupational ill health and associated costs.

2. HR and Organisational Development

This report supports the Council's commitment to the health, safety and welfare of employees and service users.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is safe	-	Protecting and supporting children and young people at risk in a safe environment.
Building strong, safe and resilient communities	-	Improving the physical and emotional wellbeing of service users and employees across the Council through effective health and safety management and practice.
Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy	-	Recognising that Council employees are its most valuable asset and

		providing training and support to allow them to develop within the organisation and gain the skills and experience necessary to provide top quality services to service users.
Working together to improve outcomes	-	Facilitating the health, safety and well being of our service users and employees by ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are developed and adhered to and that all legal requirements for health and safety are fulfilled.

4. Legal

The Council will continue to comply with current health and safety legislation.

5. Property/Assets

Implementation of the council's health and safety policy will ensure sustainability in service delivery.

6. Information Technology

The health and safety databases are facilitated through the Council's email server system.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the council's website.

8. Health and Safety

This policy reflects the commitment of the director, heads of service and managers to ensure that the main priorities for action are achieved within an environment, which is safe and is not harmful to the health of employees, clients and other users.

9. Procurement

None.

10. Risk

This report supports the overarching management of risk within the council.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

12. Cosla Policy Position

None.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

(i) Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy 2019-2022 – May 2019

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Children's Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

Children's Services
GMcK/LB
10 March 2021

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Appendix 1

Annual update - Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy for year 2019/2020

Health and Safety Focused Themes	Description	Planned Start Date	Date Completed	Notes
1.Violence and Aggression	1.1 Violence and Aggression Policy Finalise the Violence and Aggression policy for implementation across Education establishments. 1.2 Monitor Violence and Aggression Incidents Ensure all Business World entries are monitored and actioned.	August 2019	March 2020	Violence and Aggression flowchart updated and scenarios development to be presented to the next meeting of the V&A meeting in March 2020. All business world entries reviewed on a weekly basis.
2. Mental Health Addressing Stress (Work and Non Work related)	2.1 Occupational Health Staff are informed by management that they can access the council's occupational health services and counselling service "time for talking". 2.2 Health Awareness Events The department will continue to support and promote council wide health awareness events and circulate information to staff.	August 2019	March 2020	Information is available for staff on Renfo about counselling services available for employees. Information circulated to staff on council wide health initiatives.
3.Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)	3.1 Information Awareness Education Support Managers are asked to remind staff who work with this type of risk to look out for symptoms and ask for an occupational health referral if required.	August 2019	March 2020	Corporate Health and Safety Questionnaire circulated to ESMs for completion and completed forms returned to Corporate Health and Safety.

4.Fire Safety Management	4.1 Fire Risk Assessment In accordance with legislation fire risk assessments will be reviewed and revised as necessary to include assessment of PEEP (personal emergency evacuation plans) for staff, clients or frequent users of the service.	August 2019	March 2020	All children's services establishments are reminded that fire risk assessments should be updated annually for their establishments.
5.Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders	5.1 Manual Handling Ensure manual handling activities within the service have been identified and suitably risk assessed.	August 2019	March 2020	Inclusion Support Officers liaise with HTs on an individual basis to support staff / pupils with manual handling.
6. Managing Contractors	6.1 Disruption Management Plan Resources Support Manager to work with project manager for any school adaptions / new builds to ensure that an adequate disruption management plan is in place.	August 2019	March 2020	Discussions have taken with project managers who are overseeing early years 1140 expansion projects to ensure the adequate disruption management plans are in place for works that are being undertaken during term time.
7. Audits	7.1 Statutory Compliance Continue to have maintenance checks and remedial works carried out. Establishments to record requests within electronic CAMIS system where appropriate.	August 2019	March 2020	All schools reminded that any repairs / faults should be logged onto CAMIS for repair. The property log book was adapted for use in Children's Residential Houses to bring in line with school recording procedures.

	7.2 General Risk Assessment Monitor risk assessments recorded on GRAD and on RENFO (for educational establishments). Ensure required reviews have been taken forward. 7.3 Display Screen Assessments Monitor the implementation and management of display screen equipment self assessments for appropriate employees.			GRAD is no longer in use. Risk Assessments will be available via Business World but no confirmed date is available. All children's services risk assessments are available on RENFO. Headquarters staff reminded that DSC assessments should be carried out annually.
8. Inspections	8.1 Establishment WOIR Inspections WOIR inspections in establishments to include education establishments joint inspection with trade union representatives. Ongoing - annual programme in place. 8.2 Audit of Children's Services establishments by corporate health and safety team Audit of establishments by Health and Safety team to ensure safe working practices and compliance. 8.3 CSHSAP2017.4.1 Preparation for BSI Preparation to achieve accreditation to BSI Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001:2007.			Schools are reminded to carry out their annual inspection and trade union reps should be given the invitation to attend this walk round. The corporate health and safety team visit education establishments on request to assist with H&S queries. Resources Support Manager carries out pre audits of establishments selected for BSI inspection.

Appendix 2

Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy Update 2020/21

Health and Safety Focused Themes	Description	Planned Start Date	Date Completed	Notes
1.Violence and Aggression	1.1 Violence and Aggression Policy Finalise the Violence and Aggression policy for implementation across Education establishments. 1.2 Monitor Violence and Aggression Incidents Ensure all Business World entries are monitored and actioned.	April 2020	March 2021	The Violence and Aggression Group meeting of April 2020 had to be rescheduled due to COVID-19 pandemic. Gordon McKinlay has re-established the group with the initial meeting on January 2021 All business world entries reviewed on a weekly basis.
2. Mental Health Addressing Stress (Work and Non Work related)	2.1 Occupational Health Staff are informed by management that they can access the council's occupational health services and counselling service "time for talking". 2.2 Health Awareness Events The department will continue to support and promote council wide health awareness events and circulate information to staff.	April 2020	March 2021	Information is available for staff on Renfo about counselling services available for employees. In addition to this information emails have been sent out to employees weekly from the communication team with links to government websites and supports to help staff with their mental / physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information circulated to staff on council wide health initiatives. Including any information available to employees around supports for COVID-19.
3.Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)	3.1 Information Awareness Education Support Managers are asked to remind staff who	April 2020	March 2021	Education Support Managers are aware they have to remind staff

	work with this type of risk to look out for symptoms and ask for an occupational health referral if required.			working in these areas to look out for symptoms and make any necessary referrals to occupational health.
4.Fire Safety Management	4.1 Fire Risk Assessment In accordance with legislation fire risk assessments will be reviewed and revised as necessary to include assessment of PEEP (personal emergency evacuation plans) for staff, clients or frequent users of the service.	April 2020	March 2021	All children's services establishments are reminded that fire risk assessments should be updated annually for their establishments.
5.Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders	5.1 Manual Handling Ensure manual handling activities within the service have been identified and suitably risk assessed.	April 2020	March 2021	Inclusion Support Officers liaise with HTs on an individual basis to support staff / pupils with manual handling.
6. Managing Contractors	6.1 Disruption Management Plan Resources Support Manager to work with project manager for any school adaptions / new builds to ensure that an adequate disruption management plan is in place.	April 2020	March 2021	Project managers ensure that adequate disruption management plans are in place for works that are being undertaken during term time. Any contractors visiting educational establishments during the ongoing pandemic are required to follow the establishment COVID risk assessment. The should also have in place their own COVID risk assessment for the tasks they are carrying out and come equipped with appropriate PPE.
7. Audits	7.1 Statutory Compliance Continue to have maintenance checks and remedial works carried out.	April 2020	March 2021	All schools reminded that any repairs / faults should be logged onto CAMIS for repair.

	Establishments to record requests within electronic CAMIS system where appropriate. <u>7.3 General Risk Assessment</u> Monitor risk assessments recorded on GRAD and on RENFO (for educational establishments). Ensure required reviews have been taken forward. <u>7.4 Display Screen Assessments</u> Monitor the implementation and management of display screen equipment self assessments for appropriate employees.			The property log book was adapted for use in Children's Residential Houses to bring in line with school recording procedures. All children's services risk assessments are available on RENFO. DSC assessments are now available on Business World for completion. Staff have all been reminded that they should update their DSC on business world as soon as possible.
8. Inspections	<u>8.1 Establishment WOIR Inspections</u> WOIR inspections in establishments to include education establishments joint inspection with trade union representatives. Ongoing - annual programme in place. WOIR to Include COVID Considerations <u>8.2 Audit of Children's Services establishments by corporate health and safety team</u> Audit of establishments by Health and Safety			Establishments are reminded to carry out their annual inspection and trade union reps should be given the invitation to attend this walk round. Corporate Health and Safety created a COVID compliant WOIR form for schools to complete prior to schools re-opening in August 2020. The corporate health and safety team visit establishments on

	team to ensure safe working practices and compliance. <u>8.3 CSHSAP2017.4.1 Preparation for BSI</u> Preparation to achieve accreditation to BSI Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001:2007.			request to assist with H&S queries and to ensure control measures for COVID19 in place. In light of COVID additional inspections for the creation of HAZID's for establishments was undertaken prior to re-opening of schools Due to COVID restrictions visits to establishments have been reduced this session. The Resources Support Manager carries out pre-inspection audits of establishments selected for BSI inspection.

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2020/21 Outturn Report**

1. Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the performance of Children's Services for the 12-month period to 31 March 2021 in relation to the Service Improvement Plan which was approved in March 2020. That plan was drafted for committee before the extent to which Covid-19 would impact services became apparent.

1.2. This report provides a summary of performance in Children's Services for the 2019/20 period, with detailed explanation on all relevant actions and performance indicators. This includes details of those actions delayed or cancelled as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and/or the need to refocus service priorities in order to manage the pandemic response.

1.3. The Service Improvement Plan sits beneath the Council Plan, Community Plan, and along with the service's risk register and workforce plan forms a suite of documents which provide the strategic direction for the service. Service Improvement Plans are aligned to the priorities set out in the Council Plan 2017-2022 and include those areas of the Council Plan for which Children's Services is the lead.

1.4. In March 2020, the service identified key actions it aims to achieve over the next three years, in order to deliver improved outcomes for local people and communities and contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan 2017-22. Given the unprecedented nature of events in 2020/21, these three-year plans have been curtailed and replaced by Service Delivery Plans which cover a single year (2021/22) and outline what each service plans to do to mitigate

the effects of the pandemic and associated restrictions, as well as actions to support recovery and renewal. The Children's Services Service Delivery Plan was presented to this Board on 18 March 2021 and to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 16 March 2021.

1.5 The action plan is the core of the Service Improvement Plan. It sets out the priorities being addressed, the key tasks to be implemented, the implementation timetable and the measures of success. The service scorecard sets out a range of key indicators against which aspects of performance of the service are measured. Despite the challenges of maintaining services throughout different stages of restrictions, Children's Services continued to deliver on its priorities and select achievements are highlighted in Section 4 of this report.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Children's Services Policy Board note:

a) the contents of this report;
b) the achievements of Children's Services during 2020/21 which fall within the remit of this Board;
c) that an outturn report was presented to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 18 May 2021 in respect of service areas falling within the remit of that board.

3. Background

3.1 Children's Services is responsible for the delivery of social work services to children and families, criminal justice social work, and early years, primary and secondary education. Much of what the service does is statutory; that is, there is a legal requirement for the Council to provide that service. Service delivery is a mix of universal provision (such as education), targeted provision (such as children's houses for accommodated children and young people) and specialist support (for example, criminal justice social work court services).

3.2 The service accounts for over half of the Council's overall budget and delivers a range of provisions, such as:

- 49 Primary Schools;
- 11 Secondary Schools;
- 12 Early Years Centres and 23 nursery classes;
- 2 Schools for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
- Social Work Fieldwork Teams;
- 4 children's houses;
- Supported accommodation for young people leaving care;

- Criminal Justice Social Work (Fieldwork, Unpaid Work service; Throughcare; Women's Community Justice; Court Services; Drug Treatment and Testing Orders);
- Fostering and Adoption services; and
- Kinship Care.

3.3 Children's Services has an approach which is strongly focused on prevention, early intervention and providing additional support for the most vulnerable. Whilst children's health services sit within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), a key priority of both organisations will be the continuation of effective integrated working.

3.4 The Service Improvement Plan is one of the ways in which elected members can scrutinise the work of Children's Services, and to consider and decide upon policy options as necessary. Importantly, the Service Improvement Plan also links the Council Plan and Community Plan priorities to strategic and operational activity within the service, which supports employees to understand how their role contributes to the Council delivering on its objectives.

3.5 The action plan details the progress of specific areas of work which, during 2020/21, enabled the service to support the Council's priorities and help deliver improved outcomes for Renfrewshire residents. It also reflects those areas which were paused or cancelled in order to focus more on frontline service delivery and crisis response. Section 4, which covers the achievements of the service, includes activity which could not have been envisioned when the 2020/21 Service Improvement Plan was written.

3.6 The service also measures progress by reporting on performance indicators. The scorecard included in Appendix 1 provides details of the progress of these indicators throughout 2020/21 against set targets. Some indicators are dependent on other services being operational and could not be collected during 2020/21 whilst others require considerable input from frontline staff and would have taken resources away from core services at a time when there was an acute need to bolster these.

4. Key Achievements 2020/21

4.1 Although operating within a very challenging context for much of the year and requiring to provide a range of additional support as a direct result of the pandemic, Children's Services continued to meet and exceed its statutory obligations in 2020-21.

4.2 The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for Children's Services. A new multi-agency, community-based family support service is being developed in partnership with Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and the third sector and will provide holistic support for a

range of different needs. Considerable work was undertaken in 2020/21 to identify gaps in provision and lay the foundations for this new service.

4.3 A 'Coping During Covid' helpline was set up for children and families facing wellbeing issues during the lockdown, and this was complemented by targeted support from a range of children's professionals from the public and third sectors. A curriculum programme, "Skills for Recovery" was delivered in response to the pandemic to support the wellbeing of pupils, parents and staff. This offered practical help and also signposted families and staff to additional supports where these were needed.

4.4 The pandemic resulted in the Scottish Government recognising that the August 2020 deadline for increasing all local authority early years provision to 1140 hours was no longer feasible. Renfrewshire Council is on target to deliver this for all eligible children by the new deadline of August 2021, as delays were due only to the pandemic and its impact on construction. As at 31 March 2021, 91% of children attending nursery were already receiving 1140 hours per year and good progress continues to be made with the new build and refurbishment projects.

4.5 As noted above, Children & Families Social Work continued to operate throughout lockdown to protect the most vulnerable children, ensure statutory processes can continue, to ensure children who are accommodated are supported to have contact with their families and to ensure young people who are care-experienced feel safe and supported. Regular contact with all children who have a multi-agency plan has taken place throughout lockdown periods, with workers finding different ways to connect with the children and families they support. Social work services also responded to legal changes; new training and guidance has been developed on the Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Act 2019 which came into force in November 2020 and a short-life working group is preparing for the implementation of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2020. Programmes such as intensive family support service and the mentoring service provided in partnership with Aberlour continued throughout the year, despite restrictions.

4.6 There was external recognition of the high quality of services in Renfrewshire, with Gryffe High School named as Scottish State School of the Year by The Sunday Times, following from a recent Education Scotland inspection where it received a grade of "Excellent' for raising attainment and achievement. Two additional schools, Heriot and Brediland Primaries, have been awarded the prestigious Scottish Government Digital Schools Award since August, recognising positive digital learning experiences for children and young people. To date, 36 of our schools have now received this award. Six schools have been awarded the LGBT Charter Award, three at bronze and three at

silver, whilst three schools have PATHS Worldwide model school status. Results from Education Scotland inspections continued to compare favourably against other local authorities. The service's Development Officer Team has been nominated for this year's General Teaching Council Excellence in Professional Learning Award.

4.7 The Renfrewshire Digital School was launched in October to support pupils who were self-isolating or shielding as a result of coronavirus. It provides a range of resources across the curriculum as well as direct access to teaching staff. There are also resources for parents and early years and primary school children are provided with home learning packs. Primary school children can access a virtual classroom and ask a teacher questions about the work they are doing, whilst secondary pupils can access a teacher surgery where staff are available to answer questions from each subject area. This on-line service, postponed during lockdown, will resume when all pupils return to school in April offering support to any pupil requiring to self-isolate at home.

4.8 The Renfrewshire Future Pathways programme, with its focus on employability and positive post-school destinations, continued to expand and found ways to work around restrictions, such as offering virtual work placements in fields such as construction and hospitality. Schools continued to offer senior students accredited personal achievement opportunities linked to employability and personal development.

4.9 Professional development activities for classroom-based staff continued throughout 2020/21 and strong partnership working with the University of Strathclyde on literacy and with Winning Scotland on numeracy are contributing to the delivery of a high-quality curriculum. Literacy work has also benefited from targeted support provided by the school library staff and from the English as an Additional Language Team.

4.10 Children's Services identified the construction of a new Paisley Grammar Community Campus as its learning estate investment priority in May 2019. During 2020, the Service conducted a formal consultation on the proposal which was supported by Education Scotland and approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board in January 2021. Having met all the qualifying criteria identified by ministers, the project has now been included in phase 2 of the Scottish Government's £1 billion Learning Estate Investment Programme.

4.11 The roll-out of digital learning and teaching was a necessity during lockdown periods and new resources were introduced or developed. This included live and recorded lessons and a wide range of high-quality learning activities that

supported all children and young people in their learning. Home learning packs with printed materials were also available in addition to digital resources, and the Family Learning team provided community-based support and practical advice. The service distributed thousands of pieces of ICT equipment and put in place professional development activities for staff and guidance to help children and families to access online learning and to help care experienced young people stay in touch with their support networks.

4.12 Council services worked together to ensure that safe working, learning and care environments were provided, and to organise payments for the families of more than 6000 children and young people to ensure that the absence of a free school meal did not mean children went hungry.

5. Progress against performance measures

5.1 Children's Services has 31 performance indicators covering services which fall under the remit of this policy board. Of these, 11 are collected quarterly over a financial year (1 April to 31 March) and 20 are annual indicators measured over an academic year (1 August to 31 July). Almost all the annual indicators measure academic attainment and due to the time lag before figures are published, these are reported one year behind; this outturn report includes 2019/20 attainment data.

5.2 The most significant point to note with regards attainment data is that examinations did not take place in 2019/20 due to the pandemic and the assessment method and results are therefore not directly comparable with previous years. Nonetheless, Renfrewshire continues to show strong performance and continuous improvement against a number of measures. The percentage of pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 in literacy and numeracy continued to increase and Renfrewshire is ahead of the national average for these indicators. Children's Services set itself very challenging targets for average tariff scores and whilst these were not quite achieved in 2019/20, performance continued to improve for most indicators.

5.3 Stay-on rates for S4 pupils remain high and above the national average. Almost all pupils stay in school until S5 and almost three-quarters stay on for S6. In addition to traditional exams, Renfrewshire Council offers vocational training within schools as well as focusing on employability skills, personal development and leadership in the senior phase, supporting young people to leave school with the skills to continue with their education or to take up employment or training.

5.4 Wherever possible and appropriate, Children and Families Social Work aim to place Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC) within a family

setting. The service continues to deliver this for over 80% of accommodated children and is successful in attracting and retaining foster carers. Once children and young people leave care, they have a right to throughcare services from the council. In 2020/21, these services exceeded the target for the percentage who were in education, employment or training, reflecting the current focus of that team.

5.5 The two performance indicators which relate to early years provisions were updated in 2020/21 to reflect the change in hours provided from 600 per year to 1140, which had been due to be implemented by August 2020. Due to the pandemic, the Scottish Government delayed the implementation date by 12 months. Renfrewshire Council's programme of expansion has proceeded despite restrictions and so these indicators have been included in the scorecard in Appendix 2.

5.6 Some indicators did not quite meet the targets set for them in 2020/21. Targets were set prior to the pandemic and so had not factored in the impact of prolonged restrictions and the additional demands felt by all council services. The poverty-related attainment gap between pupils in the most and least deprived areas of Renfrewshire was 34% against a target of 32% but did narrow compared to the previous year's position and may have been impacted by the change in assessment. The average tariff score (the points generated by exam results) for looked after children fell this year; this is a challenging measure as there is a very small cohort and it changes each year, so the results of a few individuals can have a dramatic effect on the total. Despite this, our targets will remain ambitious for this group of young people. It is worth noting, however, that almost all figures remain in line with or above or virtual comparator figures.

5.7 Children's Services works closely with colleagues in Communities and Housing to prevent homelessness for young people, particularly our care-experienced young people. The service has set itself a goal that none of the care experienced young people it works with will experience homelessness. In Q3 2020/21, 5% of this group presented as homeless, which equates to six young people. By homeless, we mean a person with no tenancy or permanent residence of their own, rather than a rough sleeper. All six young people were provided with temporary accommodation when they contacted services. It remains a priority for both services to ensure that no care leavers find themselves without a home, and this challenging target will remain in place.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – This report highlights resourcing pressures arising from increasing demand for services and the current financial environment.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none

3. **Community/Council Planning –** the report details a range of activities which reflect local council and community planning themes.

4. **Legal** – none

5. **Property/Assets** – none

6. **Information Technology** – Digital resources are now key to the delivery of services and strategies are in place to manage this.

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – Children's Services continues to follow current public health guidance in relation to the safe operation of care establishments, learning establishments and other working environments.

9. **Procurement** – none.

10. **Risk** – Risks related to the delivery and management of services are regularly monitored and included in Renfrewshire Council's Corporate and Strategic Risk Registers.

11. **Privacy Impact** - none

12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none.

13. **Climate Change** - none

List of Background Papers: None

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Children's Services SIP 2020-21

Action Status	
	Cancelled
	Overdue
	In Progress; Assigned
	Completed

Strategic Priority 1: Reshaping our place, our economy and our future

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
	CS.SIP.20.01a	Develop high quality learning and teaching that leads to improved levels of attainment and achievement in all of our establishments.	Staff are skilled and knowledgeable and able to effectively support children and young people in their learning and development.	31-Mar-2021	100%	Practitioners from schools across Renfrewshire have attended Career-Long Professional Learning based on evidence-based approaches to the teaching of literacy and numeracy with a specific focus on raising attainment and supporting recovery. This has included professional learning at all levels from Newly Qualified Teachers to school leaders. Engagement has largely been from the primary sector with secondaries largely focussing on SQA/senior phase.	Education Manager (Curriculum)

	CS.SIP.20.01b	Improve employability skills and support all of our young people to enter positive destinations and sustained post-school destinations.	Equipping children and young people with the skills needed in the workplace improves opportunities and life chances for all.	30-Jun-2020	70%	Our Renfrewshire Future Pathways programme has continued to expand this year, albeit online due to Covid-19 restrictions. The programme provides bespoke opportunities for some of our most vulnerable young people to have experience of interview skills and preparation for the world of work. It has also provided opportunities for a cohort of young people to undertake work placements (again virtually this year) in areas such as construction and hospitality. The figure for Renfrewshire's young people leaving school and moving into a positive and sustained destination has been increasing over the last 3 years, though did have a slight dip this year (94%) due to reduced opportunities as a result if the pandemic; however it was still above the national average of 93.3%. We are currently working with Skills Development Scotland to further embed the Career Education Standard across all schools.	Education Manager (Senior Phase)
	CS.SIP.20.01c	Develop and strengthen our partnership with the Winning Scotland Foundation and Stanford University in the field of Mathematical Mindsets.	Equipping children and young people with the skills needed in the workplace improves opportunities and life chances for all.	31-Mar-2021	50%	There are currently 58 practitioners representing both primary and secondary sectors engaging in the Limitless Learning in Maths course, delivered in partnership with Winning Scotland. The course is supporting practitioners to enact the principles of Growth Mindset in the classroom and helping young people develop the confidence, resilience and high-order thinking skills required to succeed in the 21st century.	Education Manager (STEM)
	CS.SIP.20.01d	Expand the support offered to young people to develop leadership skills and increase levels of pupil participation in schools and beyond.	Equipping children and young people with the skills needed in the workplace improves opportunities and life chances for all.	31-Mar-2021	10%	Between Aug and December 2020, 4 secondary schools participated in a reconnection day as part of the CANI Pupil Leadership Programme to create a well-designed structure to build leadership capacity within the school community. Seven secondaries signed up for the 2020-21 residential leadership programme which we were hopeful would take place	Education Manager (Professional Development and Leadership)

						early 2021. As it became clear this was not going to happen due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, in-school Goal Attainment Programmes were established for January-March 2021. However, due to the further lockdown, all pupil leadership plans have been postponed until session 2021-22.	
❎	CS.SIP.20.01e	Review the curriculum for a specific focus on learner pathways (2-18) and the S3 curriculum.	The curriculum will be coherent and flexible and provide progression and levels of attainment for all children and young people.	31-Mar-2021	0%	This priority was delayed as a result of the pandemic.	Head of Quality and Curriculum
🛑	CS.SIP.20.01f	Develop progression pathways on literacy and numeracy which align with national expectations but can be tailored to ensure they are relevant to the context of individuals schools.	The curriculum will be coherent and flexible and provide progression and levels of attainment for all children and young people.	31-Mar-2021	75%	Literacy progression pathways are being developed in partnership with Education Scotland and the National Literacy Network with an initial focus on reading and writing, underpinned by the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach. Numeracy and maths pathways are in place.	Education Manager (Curriculum)
🛑	CS.SIP.20.01g	Develop the breadth of choice available to young people by expanding the curriculum offer in the senior phase to include a wider range of accredited achievement opportunities and vocational programmes including the expansion of Foundation Apprenticeships.	Equip children and young people with the skills knowledge and experience to be successful in life beyond schools.	31-Mar-2021	65%	Schools are increasingly offering accredited personal achievement opportunities within the senior phase linked to employability skills and personal development skills. The numbers of young people undertaking, and completing, Foundation Apprenticeships (both one year and two year programmes), while still relatively small, have been increasing year on year. We currently have one Foundation Apprenticeship which is council led and plan to introduce more using this model.	Education Manager (Senior Phase)

Strategic Priority 2: Building strong, safe and resilient communities

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
	CS.SIP.20.02a	Further explore the opportunities presented by embedding a Family Group Decision Making approach within Children and Families social work.	Early intervention supports families to make positive changes which improve relationships and may prevent compulsory measures.	31-Mar-2021	45%	Two senior managers have now completed accredited FGDM training. An FGDM offer to families is a statutory requirement and its benefits were highlighted by the Independent Care Review. Right for Renfrewshire service re-design work was on hold during pandemic but has now re-started. Our approach to supporting children to remain safely within their families, including FGDM, will be considered within this process.	Quality Assurance and Practice Development Manager
	CS.SIP.20.02b	Further develop support for and use of kinship care	Families are supported to be able to provide a stable and safe environment for children and young people.	31-Mar-2021	5%	The pandemic has impacted significantly on this action as officers have required to focus on ensuring effective delivery of existing service. There is a development session planned for early May and an action plan will be produced following this.	Children's Services Manager
	CS.SIP.20.02d	Further develop the fostering service, with a focus on placements for older children.	Families are supported to be able to provide a stable and safe environment for children and young people. Older children are able to remain in a family placement rather than a residential care service.	31-Mar-2021	CANCELLED	The pandemic has impacted significantly on this action, as the service has had to focus on supporting existing foster carers to continue to care for children during lengthy periods of national lockdown. It is unlikely that there will be much progress with this action until we are living with significantly less restrictions due to Covid 19.	Children's Services Manager
	CS.SIP.20.02e	Implement recommendations flowing from the national reviews of child protection and the care system.	Child protection practice is further enhanced and strengthened in line with recommendations.	31-Mar-2021	100%	The Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Act 2019 came into force in November 2020 and a short-life working group has developed local practice guidance and training which will go for final approval to Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee in June 2021. A Renfrewshire response to new national child protection guidance was submitted to the Scottish Government in January 2021. The Learning Review consultation	Child Protection Adviser

						was completed and a final version has been circulated with a view to launching in May 2021. The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 is expected to be in force from October 2021 and a short life working group has been set up to prepare for this.	

Strategic Priority 3: Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
	CS.SIP.20.03a	Continue to work towards providing 1140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare for all eligible children in Renfrewshire.	Children are given the best start and are supported to reach their full potential.	31-Jul-2020	100%	As a result of the unavoidable delays caused by the pandemic, the Scottish Government has extended the deadline for provision of 1140 hours to August 2021. Despite restrictions, Renfrewshire has been able to progress this work and already 91% (3387) of eligible children have been able to access 1140 during 2020/21. The remaining 9% are currently receipt of 600 hours and will access 1140 hours by August 2021. This action has been included in the Service Delivery Plan for 2021/22 to reflect the revised national deadline.	Education Manager (Early Years)
	CS.SIP.20.03b	Ensure Renfrewshire is a 'Child Friendly' place where children are nurtured and thrive.	All children in Renfrewshire have the best possible start in life.	31-Mar-2021	100%	A broad range of evidence-based support, resources and guidance have been established in order to nurture wellbeing and ensure all our children and young people thrive. Both during the periods of lockdown and when schools and centres have been open, significant progress has continued to be made to expand and embed the implementation of our nurturing relationships approach. A qualitative evaluation of the programme has been published as part of PhD research by education psychologists demonstrating highly effective practice across schools. During lockdown an anxiety helpline was established to	Director of Children's Services

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
						provide support for children and families. On return to school a trauma informed skills for recovery programme has been a highly effective tool used by schools to support children and young people. Further work is ongoing with the establishment of a mental health and wellbeing strategy group to build capacity and ensure services and partners are working closely together.	
	CS.SIP.20.03c	Review support for young carers, identifying opportunities to improve life chances.	Young carers have time away from their responsibilities and are supported to make time for themselves.	31-Mar-2021	40%	The needs of children and young people with caring responsibilities is being considered as a part of our service re-design. Work is ongoing to embed young carers' support within our wider GIRFEC approach, rather than as a stand-alone service. The development of 'The Bridge', our new, multi-agency community-based family support service, will co-ordinate the identification and provision of holistic supports to young carers.	Quality Assurance and Practice Development Manager
	CS.SIP.20.03e	Implement the recommendations of the ASN review.	Children and young people are supported to remain in mainstream education with their peers.	31-Mar-2021	50%	Following a pause as a result of the period of lockdown, further work has concluded in engaging with stake holders to develop the locality model . This includes ongoing engagement with unions in order to agree revised roles and remits of LGE staff. Small tests of change are being undertaken across a range of areas of the service in order to ensure approaches will be achievable when scaled up. As a result of the unavoidable delay, this action has been included in the Service Delivery Plan for 2021/22 with a revised due date of 31 March 2022.	Head of Schools
	CS.SIP.20.03f	Develop the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategic Partnership with Barnardos to address the causes and symptoms of poor mental health in children and young people.	Children and young people enjoyed improved mental health and can access appropriate support if and when they need it.	31-Mar-2021	100%	The Mental Health and Well-being workstream has worked with Barnardo's Scotland to build a new approach to supporting children and young people with challenges in relation to mental health. "The Bridge" model ensures that help is	Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
						available at the earliest point where a child or young person requires it.	
	CS.SIP.20.03g	Provide high quality education and support to narrow the outcomes gap for children from disadvantaged groups.	Children are given the best start and are supported to reach their full potential.	31-Mar-2021	75%	This has been a fragmented year for pupils with a mixture of in-school, blended and remote learning. The way we delivered learning and teaching has changed considerably. Staff developed their digital skills to ensure they were maximising the learning opportunities via digital platforms. Pupils experienced high quality on-line, remote learning experiences which enabled them to build on the knowledge and skills developed in school. Whilst every effort was made to engage all learners we cannot underestimate the impact the pandemic has had on learning. To fully understand this impact, an equity audit was conducted, information from which has and will continue to inform future planning and targeted intervention.	Director of Children's Services
	CS.SIP.20.03h	Implement the national Health and Wellbeing census and collaborate with the West Partnership to use the results to inform improvement.	Children and young people have increased resilience and are supported in social and emotional development.	31-Mar-2021	75%	The national HWB census was postponed due to Covid-19. The SG are currently determining how this can be implemented in academic session 21/22. A multi-agency Mental Health Action Group has been established to develop consistent, effective and preventative approaches to improving mental HWB in Renfrewshire educational establishments. The group have developed a 'Promoting MH Policy' template linked to the NHSGCC Healthy Minds Framework (6 box model), which can be adapted by establishments to suit their own contexts. The work of the Action Group feeds into the MH Governance Board. In response to the pandemic, a variety of bespoke resources have been developed, in partnership with Educational Psychologists, to promote HWB skills for recovery in children, young people, staff and parents. The CBT programme 'Living	Education Manager (Health and Wellbeing)

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
						Life to the Full' is now being rolled out to all secondary schools following the successful pilot in 7 schools last session. Counselling services are available to all children and young people over the age of 10 across Renfrewshire. Plans are underway to extend this service to under 10s and parents. We have 5 primaries, 6 secondaries and 1 ASN school piloting the Glasgow Profiling Motivation and Wellbeing tool to ensure that pupil voice is at the heart of planning for wellbeing. A range of professional learning has been offered to practitioners to enhance their skills, knowledge and confidence in areas including anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, Seasons for Growth, CEOP, LGBT and NSPCC. Our Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) peer mentoring programme is being rolled out to further secondary schools. Our HWB Development Officer coordinates and supports much of the work previously outlined as well as chairing the West Partnership Personal, Social and Emotional (PSE) workstream sub-group. High quality resources for remote delivery have been developed to support practitioners and enhance learning and teaching. In secondaries, we have been promoting opportunities for wider achievement awards for young people in the Senior Phase, for example, the SQA Mental Health and Wellbeing Award and our MVP programme. For more information, our very informative monthly newsletters can be accessed via our blog here/. Visit Twitter @EdHWB.	
	CS.SIP.20.03i	Provide enhanced educational support to care experienced children and young people through an intensive family supports service, leadership development and a	All children in Renfrewshire have the best possible start in life.	31-Mar-2021	85%	The SPACE intensive family support service and the Aberlour mentoring project were fully operational prior to the start of the pandemic and operated throughout. The progress of these	Children's Services Manager

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
		bespoke attainment mentoring programme.				approaches is reported regularly to the Scottish Attainment Challenge Governance Board. Unfortunately it has not been possible to progress the leadership development opportunities during the pandemic.	

Strategic Priority 4: Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
	CS.SIP.20.04a	Continue to work with other council services to deliver improvements to the school estate which offer a high degree of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.	Following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019, the delivery of this action will make a critical contribution towards Renfrewshire being carbon neutral by 2030.	31-Mar-2021	100%	The energy management unit is currently undertaking a series of energy efficiency initiatives to ensure environmental sustainability continues to improve within the education estate. Site surveys are regularly undertaken to determine what measures are required to improve the credentials of our buildings while maintaining a level of comfort which enhances the educational experience of children, young people and staff in sustainable spaces which are fit for learning and teaching.	Education Manager (Resources)
	CS.SIP.20.04b	Progress consultation and development work in relation to the priority schools identified in the School Estate Management Plan.	Pupils and staff enjoy a modern, fit for purpose, school estate which supports learning and achievement.	31-Mar-2021	100%	Formal consultation on a proposal to relocate Paisley Grammar School to a new build community campus closed on 20 October 2020 and a report on the findings of the consultation was submitted to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board. The school and wider community, and Education Scotland, were supportive of the proposal and the recommendation to progress with a new build community campus was approved on 21 January 2021.	Education Manager (Resources)

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
						In January 2021 the Scottish Government confirmed that the project would be supported through phase 2 of the learning estate investment programme and the Council's "status evaluation" return for the project was submitted to Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) in February 2021. By March 2021 governance arrangements to take forward the project were established and planning for the programme of works has commenced.	

Strategic Priority 5: Working together to improve outcomes

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
	CS.SIP.20.05a	Through Community Justice Renfrewshire further develop the Just Learning employability programme for people with convictions.	By addressing some of the factors which lead to offending behaviour, the rate of re-offending can be reduced. People with convictions can be supported to make positive changes.	31-Mar-2021	85%	The programme has continued to operate and develop during lockdown, moving from face to face to virtual where required with service users moving into employment, paid traineeships and full-time education, with many more gaining certificates in various courses and training. The YES course, a partnership with West College Scotland which supports service users to reach a place where training and employment is within reach, has continued. The course won the Essential Skills Award at the College Development Network Awards in December. Liaison within HMP Low Moss, to promote service involvement with prisoners pre-release and utilisation of the prison peer mentors has been impacted upon by COVID given restrictions on attending prisons during this period.	Criminal Justice Service Manager

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
	CS.SIP.20.05b	Managing the use of Attainment Challenge, Pupil Equity Fund, and Care-Experienced Fund to maximise the benefits from additional funding.	Additional funding is deployed effectively to support Children's Services in delivering the priorities of the Council.	31-Mar-2021	100%	Additional funding via the Attainment Scotland Fund was used effectively to close the poverty related attainment gap in Renfrewshire. This was achieved via five main workstreams including Learning and Teaching, Families and Communities, Leadership, Care Experienced Children and Young People and Data Analysis. As a result of Covid-19, the Deputy First Minister announced that funding could be used flexibly in response to the pandemic. As such, our programme was reviewed to ensure that approaches and interventions could continue to be delivered and that support was responsive to need. We continue to make excellent progress in achieving our programme outcomes and this has been demonstrated in the ASF end of year report as well as in the Education Scotland SAC 5 Year Impact Report which captures impact at all levels.	Head of Curriculum and Quality
	CS.SIP.20.05c	Support and challenge staff in more effective use of data to understand children's needs and drive further improvements.	Staff are comfortable using data to support their understanding of local needs and use this to inform service delivery and support improvement.	31-Mar-2021	100%	Staff continue to receive a range of support with gathering and analysis of data to inform practice. A wide range of analysis continues to be made available to schools. In the past year, this analysis has been shared via PowerBI which greatly improves the accessibility and scale of analysis available. Support for schools has successfully moved online with schools receiving one to one support via Teams and a range of training courses continue to be delivered. In addition, online video guides have been made available to all schools which can be accessed at any time. All schools continue to be supported and challenged through quality improvement visits where data trends are discussed, and next steps identified.	Head of Curriculum and Quality
	CS.SIP.20.05d	Implement and embed a new case management system for Children and Families Social Work.		31-Mar-2021	90%	The new system Eclipse is now in place and staff are accessing on a regular basis. Some outstanding minor changes and	Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
						improvements are outstanding and will be completed by the end of May 2021.	
	CS.SIP.20.05e	Roll out the leadership programme for early learning and childcare heads, deputes and middle leaders, including professional learning and qualification opportunities.	Staff at all levels recognise their individual responsibility to facilitate improved outcomes for children and young people.	31-Mar-2021	65%	The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the delivery of the programme as originally planned, by either causing a delay to the start of training or by interrupting training. Our newly appointed Depute Heads of Centre and Senior early years practitioners had the opportunity to participate in a leadership programme which included a focus on the development of leadership skills, policy and management responsibility and development. In addition around 80 leaders across the whole early years, including Funded Providers, have been supported to access certificated qualifications which have a focus on leadership development.	Education Manager (Early Years)
	CS.SIP.20.05f	Evaluate options and develop a model of joint working through an integrated children's services team which delivers an 'early help' service to families in Renfrewshire.	Families benefit from universal and targeted interventions which help them overcome challenges and supports children remaining at home, cared for by their parents.	31-Mar-2021	50%	Work was delayed because of the pandemic, however, considerable progress has been made in the final quarter via the Mental Health and Wellbeing workstream. A holistic, community-based and multi-agency approach to providing early help to families called 'The Bridge' is currently in development. The approach will build on universal supports already available and offer targeted supports at tiers 2 and 3 to support parenting and address mental wellbeing concerns. The Bridge will begin work as a test of change in a single locality and learning from it will inform expansion across the authority.	Director of Children's Services
	CS.SIP.20.05g	Contribute to a pilot and learning exercise on national training for Unpaid Work paraprofessionals.	Staff at all levels have the opportunity for personal and professional development which supports the delivery of good quality services.	31-Mar-2021	100%	Renfrewshire Council contributed to the Community Justice Scotland pilot of a training model for Unpaid Work Staff. This involved staff at all levels within the service, who found it relevant and helpful to their work. The pilot was completed prior to initial lockdown, however Covid-	Criminal Justice Service Manager

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
						19 has resulted in the wider training roll out being delayed.	
	CS.SIP.20.05h	Implement a new programme of leadership development within social work.	Staff at all levels have the opportunity for personal and professional development which supports the delivery of good quality services.	31-Mar-2021	60%	The new supervision policy is now fully implemented and all staff are now identifying learning objectives. The leadership development programme has been developed and now being rolled out.	Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice
	CS.SIP.20.05i	Work with partners on delivering the recommendations of Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drugs Commission.	Agencies work together to reduce the impact of addictions on the lives of Renfrewshire residents.	31-Mar-2022	5%	Delivery of the recommendations of the Alcohol and Drug Commission which relate to children and young people are being delivered via the Mental Health and Wellbeing workstream in Children's Services. Discussions on how the funding will be deployed have taken place involving officers from the Council, Renfrewshire HSCP and the third sector; a plan for how the funds will be deployed will be finalised by May 2021.	Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice
	CS.SIP.20.05j	Deliver a programme of events in schools related to the COP26 climate change conference in partnership with the West STEM Partnership Hub.	Our children and young people are better informed about the impact of climate change and the importance of sustainability and are supported to develop skills to meet the challenges of a climate emergency.	31-Dec-2020	0%	The COP26 was originally scheduled to take place in November 2020 but has been postponed for 1 year. This action has been cancelled.	Education Manager (STEM)

CS 2020-2021 Financial Year Scorecard

Renfrewshire Council

PI Status	
	Alert
	Warning
	OK
	Unknown
	Data Only

Long Term Trends	
	Improving
	No Change
	Getting Worse

Short Term Trends	
	Improving
	No Change
	Getting Worse

Priority Strategic Priority 2: Building strong, safe and resilient communities

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
CHS/LGBF/01	Percentage of Looked After Children cared for in the community				94%	89.9%	93%	89.9%	93%	89.9%	Performance remains stable with almost all looked after children being cared for in a community setting. Residential settings are more suitable for a small number of children and young people based on their particular needs but the service will always seek to place a child in a family setting where appropriate.
CHS/CPR/01	Percentage of children registered in this period who have previously been on the Child Protection Register				44%	n/a	29%	n/a	30%	n/a	There were 28 new CP registrations between January and March 2021; 8 of the children had previously been registered. Over the whole year, there were 125 children added to the register of whom 38 had previously been registered. Reregistrations are

											monitored as part of the Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee's performance management to ensure that there have been no inappropriate deregistrations.
CHS/LAC/01	The percentage of children made subject to a supervision order that were seen by a supervising officer within 15 days	Indicator cancelled									The new social work case management system does not allow us to report on this indicator and so it has been cancelled. The system does generate task lists and so individual workers can see which visits are due to be undertaken; children will continue to be seen at home following a supervision order but we will no longer report on timeliness on an aggregate level.
CHS/LAC/02	Percentage of accommodated Looked After Children placed with families				82%	83%	82%	83%	82%	83%	Performance is stable, and most accommodated children are placed with foster carers or prospective adopters as appropriate. There will always be a small number of children and young people for whom a residential setting better fits their needs.
RCPC/01	Number of children on the Child Protection Register at quarter end date				72	n/a	71	n/a	71	n/a	This is for information only. Child protection work continued throughout all periods of restriction over the past year and remains a priority activity.

Priority Strategic Priority 3: Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
CHS/EY/03	% of entitled 2 year olds accessing 1140 hours of early learning and childcare				98%	n/a	99%	n/a	99%	n/a	This was a new indicator for 2020/21 and no target has been set until a baseline can be established.
CHS/EY/04	% of 3 and 4 year olds accessing 1140 hours of early learning and childcare				92%	n/a	92%	n/a	92%	n/a	This indicator also includes children in their deferred year who are accessing 1140 hours of early learning and childcare, as well as the 3 and 4 year olds. The Covid pandemic delayed some of the planned infrastructure developments to support the 1140 expansion. The legislative requirement to deliver 1140 hours of early learning and childcare was postponed until August 2021
CHS/LAC/CL/01	Percentage of care leavers participating in employment, training or education				59%	53%	58%	53%	58%	53%	The numbers of care leavers who were in education, employment or training at the quarter end date is 58%, which is in excess of the target of 53%. This reflects

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
											the continued focus the Throughcare team has on education, training and employment. These figures are a snapshot taken at the end of each quarter based on young people being supported by Throughcare at that date, so the year end figure is the same as Q4.
CHS/LAC/CL/02	Percentage of care leavers who have had a period of homelessness in the last 6 months				5%	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	The figure of 3% equates to 4 young people and reflects continued improvement, and care experienced young people are a priority group for homeless services and will always be offered temporary accommodation. Throughcare and Housing continue to work together to reduce homelessness and to support young people in sustaining tenancies. These figures are a snapshot taken at the end of each quarter based on young people being supported by Throughcare at that date, so the year end figure is the same as Q4.

Priority Strategic Priority 5: Working together to improve outcomes

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
CHS/CORP/01a	% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers				100%	95%	0%	95%	95%	95%	The number of complaints has been extremely low, with only one Stage 1 complaint received in Q4; as such percentages are not a good representation of performance for quarters. During 2020/21, Children's Services received a total of 56 Stage 1 complaints, of which 53 were responded to within the five day timescale.
CHS/CORP/01b	% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers				90%	95%	80%	95%	92%	95%	Only five Stage 2 complaints were received during Q4 and all but one was responded to on time, as with Stage 1, very low numbers result in percentages which do not provide a good representation of performance. Stage 2 complaints are often complex and investigations can exceed the timescale of 20 days. During 2020/21, Children's Services received a total of

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
											39 Stage 2 complaints, of which 36 were responded to within the agreed timescale.
CHS/CORP/03	% of FOI requests completed within timescale by Children's Services				86.4%	100%	97.1%	100%	94.8%	100%	Children's Services received 135 FOI requests in 2020/21, of which 128 were responded to within the required timescale. There was a considerable drop-off in requests in the first quarter of the year but these have increased and are back at levels consistent with previous years. An IT issue resulted in a small number of requests not being received in good time and consequently there were some late responses. This affected all services and was quickly resolved once it was identified.

CS 2020-2021 Academic Scorecard

Renfrewshire Council

PI Status	
	Alert
	Warning
	OK
	Unknown
	Data Only

Long Term Trends	
	Improving
	No Change
	Getting Worse

Short Term Trends	
	Improving
	No Change
	Getting Worse

Priority Strategic Priority 1: Reshaping our place, our economy and our future

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	2019/20		Latest Note
					Value	Target	
CHS/ATT/01a	% of Leavers attaining literacy SCQF Level 4				97%	98%	The percentage of leavers in Renfrewshire achieving literacy at SCQF level 4 or above has continued to increase over the past 5 years to 97%. These figures are ahead of our virtual comparator, at 95%, and the national figure of 94%. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	2019/20		Latest Note
					Value	Target	
CHS/ATT/01b	% of Leavers attaining numeracy SCQF Level 4				95%	95%	The performance of Renfrewshire school leavers in numeracy at SCQF level 4 or above has increased to 95% since the previous year. This is ahead of the virtual comparator which is 93%, and the national figure of 92%. This represents an increasing trend over each of the last 3 years. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/ATT/01c	% of Leavers attaining literacy SCQF Level 5				88%	86%	Attainment of school leavers in literacy at SCQF level 5 or above has increased since 2018/19. Renfrewshire has consistently been ahead of both the national average (82%) and its virtual comparator (86%) for the previous 3 years. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/ATT/01d	% of Leavers attaining numeracy SCQF Level 5				78%	75%	The percentage of school leavers achieving SCQF level 5 or above in numeracy has increased to 78%. Renfrewshire remains above the virtual comparator, which rose to 75% in 2019/20, and the national figure of 71%. Over 5 years, the percentage achieving level 5 numeracy or above has increased by 7 percentage points. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years. The percentage of school leavers achieving SCQF level 5 or above in numeracy has increased to 78%. Renfrewshire remains above the virtual comparator, which rose to 75% in 2019/20, and the national figure of 71%. Over 5 years, the percentage achieving level 5 numeracy or above has increased by 7 percentage points. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years. The percentage of school leavers achieving SCQF level 5 or above in numeracy has increased to 78%. Renfrewshire remains above the virtual comparator, which rose to 75% in 2019/20, and the national figure of 71%. Over 5 years, the percentage achieving level 5 numeracy or above has increased by 7 percentage points. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/ATT/12	Average Complementary Tariff (S4)				318	317	The average complementary tariff score amongst S4 pupils in Renfrewshire has continued to increase over the previous 5 years.

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	2019/20		Latest Note
					Value	Target	
							In comparison, Renfrewshire's score was greater than that of the national average (304) and its virtual comparator (311), for the fifth year in a row. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/ATT/13	Average Complementary Tariff (S5)				588	601	The average complementary tariff score amongst S5 pupils in Renfrewshire has continued to increase over the previous 5 years. In comparison, Renfrewshire's score was greater than that of the national average (551) and its virtual comparator (563), for the fifth year in a row. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/PD/01	% of School leavers in a positive destination				94%	95%	The percentage of 2019/20 leavers entering a positive destination has decreased from previous years to 94%. However, this represents an increasing trend over 3 years. Renfrewshire is marginally ahead of the national figure, but remains behind the virtual comparator in this measure - both comparators have dropped since the previous year. The majority of our school leavers went into higher education. The figure this year was 48%, above the national average of 44%. A further 27% of leavers went to further education, however only 17% went into employment, a drop from 22% in the previous year; highlighting the economic impact of Covid-19.
CHS/PD/02	Number of foundation apprenticeships accessed by Renfrewshire school pupils		n/a	n/a	42	n/a	This indicator was introduced in 2020/21 and in the absence of baseline data, no target was set. During 2019/20, 42 young people from Renfrewshire schools began foundation apprenticeships and it is intended to grow this number year on year as part of our wider goal of positive post-school destinations for all our young people.

Priority Strategic Priority 3: Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	2019/20		Latest Note
					Value	Target	
CHS/ATT/07	Percentage gap in average total tariff score of school leavers resident in SIMD 30% most deprived and those from the 70% least SIMD deprived Renfrewshire areas.				34%	32%	The size of the gap between pupils living in most and least deprived areas has decreased in consecutive years. Although there has been continuous improvement, the reduction did not meet the target in 2019/20, due to particularly strong attainment of pupils living in the least deprived areas. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/ATT/08	Average Total Tariff Score of Looked After Children (school leavers)				218	310	The average total tariff of care-experienced school leavers decreased in 2019/20 to 218. However, the figure is greater than the 2017/18 tariff. Due to the small number of looked after pupils in each leavers cohort there is considerable variation in the average tariff from year to year. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/ATT/09	Gap between the Average Total Tariff Score of Looked After Children (school leavers) and that of the total Renfrewshire leavers cohort				78%	65%	The percentage gap between the average total tariff between looked after school leavers and the general cohort increased in 2019/20 to 78%. This was due to a drop in the average total tariff of care-experienced pupils and a increase in the average total tariff of the general cohort. The number of looked after pupils in each leaver's cohort is small therefore a high degree of variation is expected in these figures year on year. Please note - as SQA exams were cancelled as a result of Covid-19, 2019/20 data should be treated with caution as it is not a direct comparator with previous years.
CHS/ATT/14	Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Literacy between pupils living in 30% Most Deprived areas and those living in 70% Least Deprived Areas (SIMD)	Cancelled for 2019/20					This national dataset was not collected for 2019/20 due to Covid-19 restrictions being in place.
CHS/ATT/15	Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Numeracy between pupils living in 30% Most Deprived areas and those living in 70% Least Deprived Areas (SIMD)						
CHS/ATT/16	Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Literacy						

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	2019/20		Latest Note
					Value	Target	
	between pupils entitled to Free School Meals and pupils not entitled						
CHS/ATT/17	Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Numeracy between pupils entitled to Free School Meals and pupils not entitled						
CHS/SCH/07	% of children attending school (Primary)				94.1%	95.5%	Attendance was slightly below the target set for the year, but as the target was agreed in 2018/19 and the pandemic was not anticipated, this represents a high level of attendance in challenging circumstances.
CHS/SCH/08	% of children attending school (Secondary)				89.4%	91%	Attendance was slightly below the target set for the year, but as the target was agreed in 2018/19 and the pandemic was not anticipated, this represents a high level of attendance in challenging circumstances.
CHS/SCH/09	% of young people choosing to stay onto S5 after January (as % of S4 roll at September previous year)				94%	92%	Stay-on rates remain high and most pupils remain in school until at least S5. Initiatives such as foundation apprenticeships and the provision of vocational education provided by West College Scotland but delivered in-school give pupils a range of options in the senior phase.
CHS/SCH/10	% of young people choosing to stay onto S6 (as % of S4 roll at September two years before)				73%	68%	The number of pupils staying on until S6 has increased considerably since this indicator was introduced in 2017, when the S6 stay on rate was 66%. Education for the senior phase has a strong focus on personal development and employability skills as well as on academic attainment, supporting our goal of positive post-school destinations for all.

Priority Strategic Priority 5: Working together to improve outcomes

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	2019/20		Latest Note
					Value	Target	
CHS/SCH/05	Percentage of pupils satisfied with establishments Education Scotland Survey				89%	100%	Figures for this indicator are taken from pupil responses to surveys sent out by inspectors; in this case, it is the proportion responding positively to the statement “I enjoy learning at my school”. As such, they relate to a proportion of parents in a small number of schools.

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	2019/20		Latest Note
					Value	Target	
							Schools included in 2019/20 are St John Bosco Primary School, Riverbrae, East Fulton Primary School, Langbank Primary School, Our Lady of Peace Primary School, Mary Russell School, Heriot Primary School and Lochfield Primary School. This measure does not take into account other statements which cover the broader aspects of school life, such as pastoral care, extracurricular activities, and the relationships between pupils and staff.

Renfrewshire Council

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **West Partnership Improvement Collaborative: Interim Improvement Plan**

1. Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Education and Children's Service Policy Board of the contents of the West Partnership's Interim Improvement Plan (appendix 1).

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note and comment on the report.

3. Background

3.1. The West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) is made up of eight authorities which are East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, and West Dunbartonshire.

3.2. The West Partnership Improvement Plan 2020 to 2023 sets out the key areas for collaborative action to bring about improvement across the partnership region.

3.3. The Improvement Plan captures those areas where collaboration between the partners will be beneficial. Not all schools or local authorities will participate in all activities, but the plan sets out the Partnership's offer to schools, and educational settings based on stakeholder views on what they would benefit from.

3.4. As such, the Plan does not replicate or duplicate the individual local improvement plans of each partner authority but enhances the scope to support and challenge schools to improve.

3.5. In recognition of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, a major aim of the Plan and the work of the partnership is to address both recovery and renewal.

3.6. The Plan is organised under 3 key areas, each led by two Directors of Education/Chief Education Officers:-

- Collaborative Learning Networks
- Curriculum, Learning and teaching
- Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement

3.7. A fourth workstream also led by two Directors of Education, is that of Evaluation and Reporting.

3.8. In January 2021, a further plan, the Interim Action Plan, was drawn up at the request of Directors to address the challenges of the current and immediately foreseeable educational landscape. In particular, the challenges of delivering a meaningful education provision whilst most children and young people are unable to attend school.

3.9. The Interim Action Plan is based almost entirely on the existing plan for 2020 to 2023. It recognises the need to prioritise and accelerate certain aspects of the West Partnership's Plan 2020 to 2023. It acknowledges too that other aspects of the plan will be paused temporarily or placed on a maintenance basis.

3.10. The Interim Action Plan identifies 7 priority projects, each of which has a specific relevance during the period of Covid-19 restrictions. These include: important and heavily subscribed leadership activities; supporting learners with additional needs; tracking learners' wellbeing; as well as our significant contribution to the national digital learning offer, West OS.

3.11. The Interim Action Plan was recently approved by the Glasgow Region Education Committee.

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4. Progress

4.1. Following the publication of the previous Improvement Plan, the RIC have continued to put in place the systems and frameworks to help deliver on the Partnership's vision and implement actions to support the work of the eight partner authorities to help them enhance their existing efforts.

4.2. The impact of the interim plan will be monitored and reported as part of the ongoing evaluation and monitoring processes.

Implications of this report

1. Financial
None.

2. HR and Organisational Development
None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is fair	-	*None*
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	-	*None*
Working together to improve outcomes	-	*None*

4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

(a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position

Not applicable.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1: None.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Children's Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Lauren Johnston, Project Manager, 0141 618 4023, lauren.johnstone@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Children's Services
LJ
16/3/2021

Author: Lauren Johnston, Project Manager, 0141 618 4023.

The West Partnership Plan 2020-23

The Road to Renewal: Our Response to Covid-19

Interim Action Plan

January 2021

GLASGOW
CITY REGION
Education

Immediate priorities: adapting the West Partnership Improvement Plan

Interim Action Plan

Background
In response to rising infection rates and concerns relating to the new variant of Covid-19, it was announced on 4 January 2021 that most children and young people would not return to school and early years establishments until 1 February at the earliest, and that from 11 January 2021 children would access their learning remotely. The fundamental premise nevertheless is that education should continue on a full-time basis for all learners from 11 January 2021. This would comprise a combination of direct interaction, on-line and offline tasks/activities and tutorial support.

Local authorities within the West Partnership have already prepared detailed plans for the delivery of remote learning, provision of emergency childcare and support for vulnerable learners.

The West Partnership Improvement Plan, *The Road to Renewal: Our Response to Covid-19*, outlines the partnership's priorities for session 2020/23 and confirms that, as a Regional Improvement Collaborative, we are fully aware of the pressures that education staff across the West Partnership are facing as a result of Covid-19. A broad range of activities has taken place within each workstream since August 2020, including further evaluation and reporting activities, and progress updates have been provided at the most recent West Partnership Board and the Glasgow City Region Education Committee meetings in November 2020. However, in light of the immediate circumstances, it is particularly essential that the work of the West Partnership is seen to be both relevant and that it adds value to colleagues across local authorities where it matters most.

This Interim Action Plan has been drawn up at the request of Directors (15 January 2021) to address the challenges of the current and immediately foreseeable educational landscape. The plan recognises the need to prioritise and accelerate certain aspects of the West Partnership's Plan 2020-23, *The Road to Renewal: Our Response to Covid-19*, and accepts that other aspects will temporarily be paused. Almost all projects identified in the Interim Action Plan have been taken from the West Partnership's 2020-23 plan. Provision has also been made for additional projects to be included at the request of the Board.

Responsibilities
Governance and partnership links remain as agreed for the West Partnership's Plan 2020-23, *The Road to Renewal: Our Response to Covid-19.* These are outlined, below. In addition, the Senior Partnership Officer maintains an overview of each workstream's progress.

Workstream	Lead officer	WP Board links	Educ. Scotland links
Leadership, empowerment and improvement	Jennifer Crocket	Laura Mason Maureen McKenna	Pamela Di Nardo Michael Halbert
Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment	John Stuart	Jacqui MacDonald Tony McDaid	Lorna Aitken Robyn McIlroy
Collaborative Learning Networks	Helen Brown	Ruth Binks Mark Ratter	Ian Menzies Craig Melrose
Evaluation and Reporting	Lauren Johnston	Derek Brown Steven Quinn	Patricia Watson

Immediate priorities

The 7 projects, below, have been identified by the West Partnership's Board and core officer team as high priority during the period January to February / March 2021, and possibly beyond depending on restrictions resulting from current Covid-19 guidelines.

Interim Action Plan: January 2021. **Priority projects**	
Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement	
1.	Headteacher Mentoring Scheme
2.	Leadership Learning Sets
3.	Virtual Leadership Networks
Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment	
4.	West OS
5.	Support for practitioners through curriculum networks
Collaborative Learning Networks	
6.	Health and Wellbeing - Tracking learners' wellbeing
7.	Supporting learners with Additional Support Needs

Workstream:	Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement					
	What are we planning to do? (Key tasks only)	What do we hope to achieve?	Who will be responsible / involved?	What is the expected timescale?	Resource implications?	Any further information?
Project title	**Specific tasks**	**Expected outcomes**	**Participants**	**Timescale**	**Resources**	**Notes**
1. Headteacher Mentoring Scheme	Match allocated funding to enable mentoring for appropriate school leaders, as identified by local authorities.	Continued, and enhanced mentoring support for senior leaders enabling a focus on agreed, specific areas of leadership.	J Crocket / EA Workstream reps	Ongoing- by March 31st 2021	Availability of HT Mentors	Ongoing within 5/8 LAs
	Confirm further funding beyond March 31st 2021.		J Crocket / D McLelland	By Jan 31st 2021	Workstream Budget	JC / DM in communication
	Reallocation of unspent funding (from authorities who have not participated during this financial year).		J Crocket / D McLelland / EA Finance reps	By Jan 31st 2021	Workstream Budget	JC to contact DM asap
	Consideration and organisation of enhanced provision delivered by The Mudd Partnership.	Introduction of *Executive Coaching* programme addressing leadership challenges within the current context of Covid-19.	J Crocket / The Mudd Partnership	By Jan 31st 2021	Potential reallocation of existing workstream budget from other projects.	See note 1 in the section, "Further Information", below.

2. Leadership Learning Sets	Continue to facilitate planned sessions for existing two cohorts of HTs.	Ongoing support and professional learning for HTs already engaged with the programme.	J Crocket / J Mudd / S Ali	Ongoing as outlined in 20-23 Plan	Workstream Budget	15 HTs from across 7 EAs involved.
	Consider themes to be explored in order to address specifically the leadership challenges faced within the current context.	Increased relevance of materials and activities in order to offer specific learning and support related to the current context of Covid-19.	J Crocket / J Mudd / S Ali	By 31st Jan 2021 and following discussion with participants	Workstream Budget	See note 2 in the section, "Further Information", below.
	Plan facilitation training for EA nominees.	This will allow the WP to plan towards a more sustainable model of Learning Sets. Authorities will benefit from having key staff trained to undertake facilitation roles within their own area.	J Crocket / J Mudd Workstream reps Nominated EA staff	By May 2021	Workstream Budget	This training is already an agreed part of the work commissioned with The Mudd Partnership.
3. Virtual Leadership Networks	Continue to facilitate planned sessions for both DHT and HTs from across the West Partnership.	Development of supportive network for school leaders which addresses challenges faced and provides the opportunity for peer support & collaboration.	J Crocket WP Core team ES Volunteer facilitators WP Peer facilitators	Ongoing	Time commitment from all involved.	Risk that peer facilitators from establishments may not be able to commit due to current challenges.
	Consider the themes for planned events to ensure the needs of leaders are being met in relation to current challenges faced with context of Covid-19.	VLN events will be relevant to school leaders and offer added value to members of the VLN networks.	J Crocket / WP Core Team ES workstream links	Ongoing and following participant evaluation of each event.	None	All VLN events continue to be planned based on feedback from previous events.

	Continue to facilitate programme of planned 'masterclasses' to offer specific expertise on a range of topics which will support school leaders within their strategic roles.	VLN network members will feel supported in their roles in relation to specific, current challenges and will allow them to consider and plan strategic and operational improvements for their establishment/CYP.	J Crocket / WP Core Team Facilitating partners from relevant organisations eg Microsoft Education.	Ongoing and following VLN members being consulted.	Possible budget required to engage facilitators for future masterclass sessions dependant on theme.	Consultation of VLN members to take place w/c 18th January 2021.

Further information:	
Note 1	Potential use of reallocated workstream budget from other projects. (unused LA funding for HT mentoring; unused funding for *Thinking About Headship*; unused funding for Diversity in Teaching etc) A draft plan has been prepared for this to include 5 x 60 minute sessions for each nominated HT between Feb-June 2021. The Mudd Partnership has capacity to deliver this if we feel it is required and valuable. Available budgets would determine how many HTs could be supported. It is likely that around 20 HTs could be supported from a possible 20k budget).
Note 2	De-brief and forward planning sessions are already factored into the work with The Mudd Partnership. These take place between each Learning Set session. This will not incur any extra time or work.

Workstream:	Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment					
	What are we planning to do? (Key tasks only)	What do we hope to achieve?	Who will be responsible / involved?	What is the expected timescale?	Resource implications?	Any further information?
Project title	**Specific tasks**	**Expected outcomes**	**Participants**	**Timescale**	**Resources**	**Notes**
4. West OS	Accelerate the provision of lessons within West OS. Continue to work with RICs, LAs, Education Scotland and other partners to ensure maximum possible curriculum coverage during interim action plan period.	Target to get content uploaded for all top 10 senior phase subject areas. Relevant units and courses targeted. Primary BGE material also commissioned and sourced through LAs.	West OS core In addition: other RIC reps, Ed Scot team, coordinators and practitioners	Deadlines have been set for each subject within the agreed priority areas of the curriculum. (Spreadsheet drawn up).	Time for commissioned staff to produce material or time sourced from contractual time. Additional capacity for core team. Three posts pending appointment.	See note 1 in the section, "Further Information", below.
	Develop and implement communications plan. Delivered through West Partnership team, in partnership with LAs, Ed Scot, E-Sgoil and other partners, including ClickView.	All teaching staff and learners are aware of West OS and its role in the National e-Learning Offer All teaching staff and learners know the specific lessons from each subject which are on West OS	West OS core team, and WP comms team, ES comms, LA comms teams	Comms plan updated by 22 Jan 2021 Intensive Comms delivery 20 Jan – mid Feb	Support from LA comms teams and ES comms teams to plan and deliver comms plan and liaise with national press etc	Key role for Directors and EAs in supporting comms and in getting information about West OS to schools.

	Increase the number of West OS users across all sectors and schools within West Partnership and nationally. Qualitative data collected via interviews, questionnaires and other feedback sources, including social media.	200% increase from mid-Jan baseline (tbc) in the number of users of West OS. 10% WP teachers and learners are using West OS by February mid-term. Qualitative evidence of impact of collaboration on the Scottish learning system. Over 80% of users rate the resources on West OS as having a positive impact on remote learning.	WP Data information officer, ClickView-provided analytics, ES and glow data Feedback from West OS creators and users. Support from ROC	Fortnightly tracking of content next due 27 Jan. Base line of data by 25 Jan. Evaluation by end Feb. Interim evaluation of qualitative data end Feb.	Business manager for West OS to be appointed. ClickView to provide analytics as required.	See note 2 in the section, "Further Information", below.
5. Support for practitioners through curriculum networks	Provide virtual networks and professional learning opportunities: • Use of curriculum network teams as space for sharing approaches and resources, eg SQA updates. • Deliver webinars focused on digital pedagogy. • Collaborate with EAs, network members, Ed Scot to support and facilitate moderation opportunities as requested by EAs or	Enhance learners' experiences through support for curriculum networks to meet urgent priorities. Impact of CLPL evaluated through practitioner feedback: • Staff continue to use WP Curriculum Teams to share practice. • Effective pedagogy (particular focus on digital) – staff attending WP CLPL will have improved skills to teach remotely, including use of West OS. • Add value to EA work re senior phase assessment and moderation – with Ed	Curriculum network leads, supported by JS and Ed Scot to organise curriculum network meetings as requested by team members or EA officers. PD to link with Ed Scot re digital	Teams sharing activity ongoing Jan – Feb Webinar on digital approaches with Digi Scot 27 Jan Curriculum network events re digital	Teams currently established The challenge to facilitating this project will ease once additional West OS appointments are in place. Collaboration with Ed Scot is making a positive impact.	Assessment and Moderation post, required re-advertising due to very small number of applicants. Interview dates for 3 posts in Feb, therefore additional staffing capacity possibly by early March.

	members, particularly for minority subjects.	Scot, support inter-authority moderation virtual meetings for minority subjects, as requested by senior phase moderation group.	skills CLPL activity in curriculum networks. Ed Scot delivering themed webinars on pedagogy and inclusion & wellbeing. JS to facilitate moderation activity for minority subjects by request.	pedagogy during Feb. Themed webinars during Feb.		

Further information:	
Note 1	It remains challenging to secure time to release staff to produce material. Accelerated teams in place for a number of subject areas and sector teams. PD, JS and GL negotiating with practitioners and HT for time. New arrangements with EA pedagogy teams bringing some benefits.
Note 2	Issue with ClickView providing analytics – expected sharing of initial data Dec 2020. Still pending as of 20 Jan. ClickView committed to outline solution at meeting 22 Jan. Targets for increases in numbers of users will be confirmed once robust baseline data is available.

Workstream:	Collaborative Learning Networks					
	What are we planning to do? (Key tasks only)	What do we hope to achieve?	Who will be responsible / involved?	What is the expected timescale?	Resource implications?	Any further information?
Project title	**Specific tasks**	**Expected outcomes**	**Participants**	**Timescale**	**Resources**	**Notes**
6. Supporting Health and Wellbeing with a particular focus on Tracking Learners' Wellbeing	1. Create a matrix of tools for tracking learners' wellbeing 2. Identify and interview schools/ELCs to create storyboards to share practice. 3. Share storyboards through social media and the website. 4. Produce a commentary sharing lessons learned about tracking learners' wellbeing. 5. Collaboration with Ed Scot to run themed series of webinars on pedagogy, inclusion and wellbeing.	Schools and ELCs will have access to a matrix of tools to support them in selecting the most appropriate tool. 3 storyboards will be available to schools and ELCs that share practice about how schools have tracked learners' wellbeing. A commentary will be published collating the lessons learned and key principles in tracking learners' wellbeing. In collaboration with ES and HWB EA Officers CLPL activities offered that develop understanding of inclusion and wellbeing	Learner Wellbeing Network and their nominated schools and ELCs.	Feb 2021	Time from WP Core team: Helen Brown James Bowness Rachael Boyle Interviews take 1 hour per school/ELC Time from ES Colleagues	See note 1 in the section, "Further Information", below.

7. Supporting learners with Additional Support Needs	1. Engage with the ASN Officers' Network to identify practice that can be shared about supporting children with ASN during Covid-19. 2. Identify and interview schools/ELCs to create storyboards to share practice. 3. Share storyboards through social media and the website. 4. Arrange open discussions for ASN and EAL practitioners to share practice and challenges.	3 storyboards will be available to schools and ELCs that share practice about how schools have supported children with additional needs during Covid-19. ASN and EAL practitioners will have had the opportunity to share experiences and expertise in their specific field.	ASN Officers Network and their nominated schools	Mar 2021 ASN Open Discussion Mar 2021 EAL Open Discussion 26th Jan	Time from WP Core team: Helen Brown James Bowness Rachael Boyle Interviews take 1 hour per school/ELC	

Further information:	
Note 1	Identified schools and ELCs to develop storyboards will be agreed in partnership with the relevant established Officers' Network: Collaborative Learning Network Workstream Members Families and Communities Officers' Network CLD Managers' Network Engaging Families in Transitions Network Learner Wellbeing Network ASN Officers' Network

Renfrewshire Council

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Scottish Attainment Challenge Mid-Year Report**

1. Summary

1.1. This purpose of this report is to inform the Education and Children's Services Policy Board of the continued progress made in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

1.2. Renfrewshire became one of nine challenge authorities in 2016. The overarching aim of the Attainment Challenge is to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

1.3. As part of the grant requirements, a bi-annual report is submitted to Scottish Government which outlines progress towards three long-term outcomes. The outcomes are to improve learning and teaching, improve health and well-being and to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

1.4. This session has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging we have ever experienced. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has been profound and has presented us with unparalleled challenges. The school and early learning and childcare closures in March 2020 resulted in significant changes in working practices and routines.

1.5. Despite these challenges, the Attainment Challenge continues to build on the excellent progress as reported by Education Scotland. All workstreams have successfully adapted and continued to deliver high quality, evidence-based approaches which are having a positive impact on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the health and wellbeing of Renfrewshire children and young people.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note the contents of the report.

3. Background

3.1. There are five main work-streams within the Attainment Challenge. These are: data analysis, learning and teaching, families and communities, leadership and care experienced children and young people.

3.2. In recognition of the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the resultant closure of schools since late March, the Scottish Government adjusted the reporting process and requested a mid-year update in April 2021.

3.3. This report will summarise the key messages from the end of year report.

4. Progress

4.1. As a result of Covid-19, there has been no update to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) collection of data which is used centrally to support the analysis of improvements in attainment and achievement in the broad general education (BGE). However, our qualitative evidence continues to demonstrate the strong impact that the Attainment Scotland Fund approaches, including Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), is having on improving learning and teaching, health and wellbeing and raising attainment for all while closing the poverty related attainment gap.

4.2. In line with Scottish Government guidance, challenge authorities have been using the funding in flexible ways in order to respond to the needs of children and young people and to support establishments in closing the poverty related attainment gap during this challenging time.

4.3. We recognise that the needs of children and young people may now look different and in order to better understand this, the central team conducted a local equity audit. The findings of this audit are summarised in a sketch note in the full report (attached as appendix) and have been used to develop a responsive support package for establishments. These findings will also inform SAC planning for 21/22.

4.4. As identified in our equity audit, health and wellbeing being is a priority and we continue to focus relentlessly on improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families. This has been particularly important in light of the current pandemic which has exacerbated the mental health challenges experienced by some individuals and families. Improvements are evident in practitioner's confidence, knowledge and practice in supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. This has been achieved through a range of high-quality professional learning opportunities, support services and through the development of supportive strategic policy and guidance.

4.5. The use and availability of data is fundamental in driving forward improvement. Analysis has been improved following the launch of interactive data dashboards, created using PowerBI data visualisation software. These dashboards have replaced PDF reports which were previously shared via email. The initial phase on dashboards includes analysis of attainment,

attendance, exclusions and demographics. The benefits of these dashboards are that staff are now able to produce their own analysis using report filters, can visualise key trends, and have easy access to all information provided by the team.

4.6. This session, young people have received a combined 270 hours of supported study aimed at helping them maximise their attainment. In order to target this support to those who need it most, 15 care-experienced young people have been identified for one-to-one or small group tuition.

4.7. Schools have accessed a bespoke website designed for self-isolating learners. Created and maintained by Development Officers, the website contains a range of literacy and numeracy resources and supports for children and young people and is used in conjunction with support from a team of dedicated teachers.

4.8. The Families and Communities workstream has delivered a range of supports this session. Inclusion Support Assistants and Transition Teachers are working with over 300 identified children and young people to improve attendance and attainment in curricular areas such as literacy and numeracy.

4.9. Despite restrictions, much of the planned leadership work for this session has gone ahead using a virtual platform, ensuring we continue to build on existing leadership capacity in our schools and early years centres. Plans for our pupil leadership programme have had to be postponed until restrictions are lifted.

4.10. All projects within the care experienced children and young people workstream have continued this session with some adjustments undertaken to ensure they are compliant. 61 children and young people are currently being supported by the Aberlour Attain mentoring programme. 72 volunteers are currently available with 28 being Renfrewshire Council staff. The SPACE team is currently working at full capacity supporting over 60 cases with daily engagement with young people. Extensive feedback and evaluation demonstrate the positive impact these projects are having on our most vulnerable children.

4.11. Despite the challenges with ongoing restrictions, we continue to be focused and committed to closing the poverty related attainment gap while raising attainment for all. The full report demonstrates the extensive work which has been achieved this session. Feedback, case studies and sketch notes provide further evidence of the impact that each project is having on attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing. In Renfrewshire, our children, young people and staff are at the heart of everything we do and we will ensure that there is no poverty of aspiration, ambition or opportunity for children and young people.

Implications of this report

1. Financial
None

2. HR and Organisational Development
None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is fair	-	*The appendix details a range of activities which reflect local community planning themes*
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	-	*The appendix details a range of activities which reflect local community planning themes*
Working together to improve outcomes	-	*The appendix details a range of activities which reflect local community planning themes*

4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

(a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
Not applicable.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1: None.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Lauren Johnston, Project Manager, 0141 618 4023, lauren.johnstone@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Children's Services
LJ/JC
13/04/2021

Author: Lauren Johnston, Project Manager, 0141 618 4023.

Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge

Literacy, Numeracy, Health & Wellbeing

Mid-Year Report

September 2020 – February 2021

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Programme Overview

This session has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging we have ever experienced. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has been profound, and presented us with unparalleled challenges. The school and early learning and childcare closures in March resulted in significant changes in working practices and routines.

In response to the pandemic and as part of our local recovery planning, the governance board reviewed the SAC plan to assess the feasibility of all projects. While some priorities shifted as a result of Covid-19, there is still a clear commitment and expectation within Renfrewshire to raise attainment for all whilst closing the poverty-related attainment gap. As a result, project leads reviewed their own plans and explored different ways in which projects could still be delivered and adapted to respond to the pandemic.

Many of our projects have successfully adapted and have continued to provide critical support. However, other projects, mainly face-to-face professional learning, was postponed or cancelled due to other pressing priorities and planning.

This session, our 5-year impact report was completed. Key themes from the Attainment Advisor led report included;

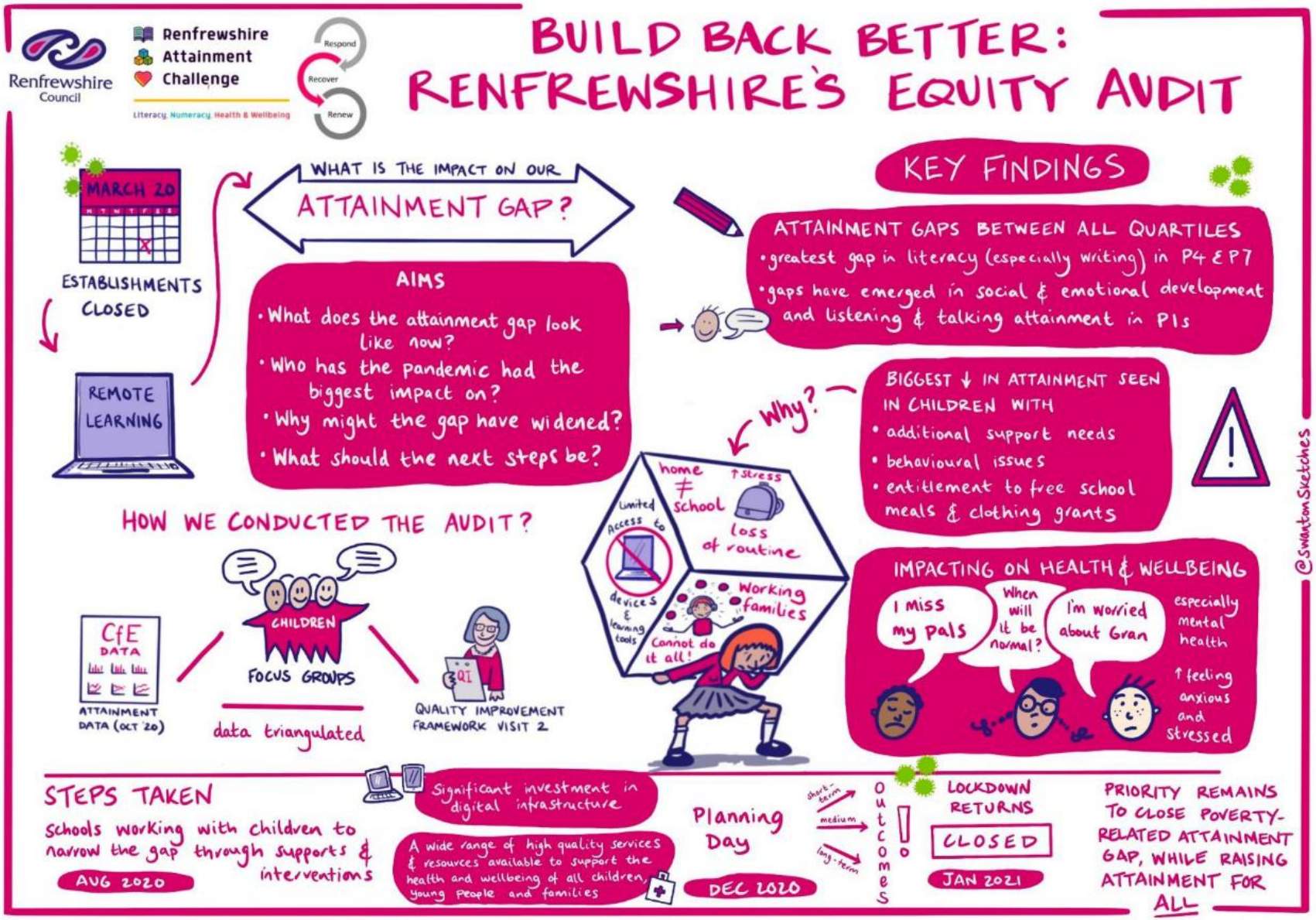
- Renfrewshire are continuing to close the poverty related attainment gap
- Strong approaches to governance and use of data has maximised the programme
- Partnership working has enhanced approaches
- A strong central team is critical
- There is a continued focus on learning and teaching, health and wellbeing and leadership

As part of this, a series of case studies were submitted demonstrating collective impact across workstreams (appendix 1). The case studied highlight the impact that collective and collaborative working can have on the outcomes for children and young people.

The authority also participated in the national Equity Audit. However, in order to understand the gap at a local level and to further support our schools, a local Equity Audit was conducted. The key themes from the audit are detailed in the sketch note on the following page. While our data is not comparative, it does demonstrate that all children and young people in Renfrewshire have been affected and not just those from the most deprived areas. However, the rate of recovery may be different for children in the most deprived areas compared with those from more affluent areas. Our data also suggests that missed physical transition opportunities between early years and P1 and P7-S1, may have a long-term impact on children and young people as they move through stages. A central planning day was hosted in December to ensure that approaches and interventions are adding value and addressing the identified gaps.

Unfortunately, our Attainment Advisor left her post to take up a new headship in December. We now have a vacant Attainment Advisor position and while we would want this support to be provided as soon as possible, there is a recognition that this will probably not be possible. Interim arrangements are in place.

We continue to have very good engagement with the West Partnership. We are actively in engaging West OS and have representation across each of the workstreams. In particular, there is very strong collaboration ongoing with the Families and Communities and Health and Wellbeing networks.


Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge
Literacy, Numeracy, Health & Wellbeing
Respond
Recover
Renew
BUILD BACK BETTER: RENFREWSHIRE'S EQUITY AUDIT
MARCH 20
ESTABLISHMENTS CLOSED
REMOTE LEARNING
WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON OUR ATTAINMENT GAP?
AIMS
• What does the attainment gap look like now?
• Who has the pandemic had the biggest impact on?
• Why might the gap have widened?
• What should the next steps be?
KEY FINDINGS
ATTAINMENT GAPS BETWEEN ALL QUARTILES
• greatest gap in literacy (especially writing) in P4 & P7
• gaps have emerged in social & emotional development and listening & talking attainment in P1s
BIGGEST ↓ IN ATTAINMENT SEEN IN CHILDREN WITH
• additional support needs
• behavioural issues
• entitlement to free school meals & clothing grants
Why?
home ≠ school
↑ stress
loss of routine
Limited Access to devices & learning tools
Working families
Cannot do it all!
HOW WE CONDUCTED THE AUDIT?
CfE DATA
ATTAINMENT DATA (OCT '20)
CHILDREN
FOCUS GROUPS
data triangulated
QI
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK VISIT 2
IMPACTING ON HEALTH & WELLBEING
I miss my pals
When will it be normal?
I'm worried about Gran
especially mental health
↑ feeling anxious and stressed
@SwantonSketches
STEPS TAKEN
Schools working with children to narrow the gap through supports & interventions
AUG 2020
Significant investment in digital infrastructure
A wide range of high quality services & resources available to support the health and wellbeing of all children, young people and families
Planning Day
DEC 2020
short-term
medium
long-term
Outcomes
!
LOCKDOWN RETURNS
CLOSED
JAN 2021
PRIORITY REMAINS TO CLOSE POVERTY-RELATED ATTAINMENT GAP, WHILE RAISING ATTAINMENT FOR ALL

Programme flexibility

Following the Deputy First Minister announcement regarding funding flexibility, all project leads revised their plans to ensure responsiveness in the current climate. This section provides detail on how funding has been used to continue supporting the needs of all children and young people.

While the main activities of providing analysis and data literacy support have not changed, the focus and delivery methods have been adapted. Training and support have moved online and there is a greater focus on 'self-serve' materials (e.g. training videos, dashboards). The types of support provided has also been adapted for the changing circumstances facing schools, for example, the team have developed an engagement tracker to support with monitoring of remote learning. The team has also provided support with allocating school places and monitoring attendance during lockdown periods.

In response to the logistical problem of hosting supported study sessions in school, centralised Higher Mathematics sessions have been offered online. So far, young people from 8 secondary schools have received a combined 270 hours of Maths supported study aimed at helping them maximise their attainment. In order to target this support to those who need it most, 15 care-experienced young people have been identified for one-to-one or small group tuition with the first sessions taking place in late January.

One commercial partner, La Salle Education, was unable to fulfil an agreement for face-to-face CLPL sessions due to lockdown. They instead offered a suite of online facilities which meant that all secondary maths teachers in the authority were given access to the Online Teacher CPD College. Additionally, all S1 pupils were given access to the "Ready for Secondary" online course to help address gaps in learning that may have been formed during lockdown.

Almost all schools have accessed a bespoke website designed for self-isolating learners. Created and maintained by Development Officers, the website contains a range of literacy and numeracy resources and supports for children and young people and is used in conjunction with support from a team of dedicated teachers.

Transition teachers have adapted to work more closely with schools around supporting more non-target children to engage in learning. The team also keep in touch with target families on a weekly basis offering support, advice and signposting families to appropriate help. They also feed into school tracking systems looking at which pupils have experienced barriers to online engagement. The intended impact is to maintain positive home-school relationships and to identify and support children and families who need greater targeted intervention on return to school.

A pack of material to support P7-S1 induction has since been developed into a digital Wakelet to support both transition and induction moving forward. The intended impact is to make available resources to support sustainability and build capacity in curricular transition. The resource will support professional learning and thinking, share practice and ideas and support transition planning.

The team have continued to work in the secondary sector, rather than moving to support a new cohort in primary. The intended impact is to ensure that the progress of S1 pupils and families who have not had a good start to their secondary career, are supported to settle into high school learning.

Renfrewshire EPS began adapting RNRA materials in March 2020 producing a suite of trauma-informed resources, 'Nurturing Wellbeing to Build Back Better (BBB)'which are designed to be easily accessible and supportive of establishments to improve staff, pupil and parents/carers wellbeing

during the period of remote learning, return to establishments and recovery from Covid-19. These resources were central to Renfrewshire's wellbeing response to Covid-19. Many establishments have used the resources and have included resulting actions and impact in their RNRA Action Plan. These resources include the 'Skills for Recovery' programme, a 6-week PSE wellbeing programme for upper primary and secondary pupils, produced in association with Renfrewshire's HWB officer and available on the HWB Website and EPS Blog.

As a result of COVID, Parents in Partnership schools have adapted plans to reflect current needs of families and provide support to any age/ stage. Schools have responded to the changing landscape and provided support to families where there is greatest need. Some schools plan to provide activities to support a more family-centred transition in 2021. They will work with children and families term 3 and 4 to ensure families feel well supported and positive about the transition. One school has already moved family learning online by providing outdoor learning opportunities such as, family nature walks and family language quizzes. This has allowed more families to have access to opportunities. Learning packs have been provided for participants and digital skills support has been provided to promote engagement.

The Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA) team have worked flexibly with other partners and agencies to support young people and families in hubs and at home experiencing anxiety relating to Covid. They also focussed on ensuring equity by supporting vulnerable young people to set up and use Chromebooks to aid remote learning.

In order to move Pizza Learning online, this required a complete re-design and upskilling of staff in digital literacy. All staff completed Connecting Scotland Digital Champions training to allow the re-design to be successfully progressed.

The impact of Covid restrictions on the Language Bank necessitated a shift from face to face interpreting support to telephone translation. Interpreters continued to provide vital welfare check in telephone calls to families and feedback support needs to the relevant agencies including Home-link and schools.

GSC Learning Lab programme being delivered entirely online has allowed full participation. At a time when excursions and visitors to schools are not permitted, even expert engagement sessions became virtual to ensure all children had the opportunity to participate.

The HWB Development Officer collaborated effectively with the Educational Psychology team to develop the 'Skills for Recovery' programme and related self-isolation resources to promote the wellbeing of pupils, staff and parents during the pandemic.

Place2Be quickly adapted their services to respond to the Co-Vid 19 pandemic providing telephone and online consultations and supports for children, young people and parents.

Delivery of 2 universal seminars were delivered as part of the Seasons of Growth programme to support loss and change experienced as a result of Covid. Workshops for children and young people support them to identify strategies and people who can help them manage their feelings. and adjust to our changed lives. 50 staff were trained to deliver the workshops across Renfrewshire schools. PSE resources tailored for remote learning have been identified.

Leadership programmes have continued to be delivered remotely and all care experienced fund projects have continued to operate with minimal changes.

Workstream highlights

This section provides an overview of key activities and highlights from each workstream. Project leads have shared what has worked well during this period including positive feedback as well as detailing any areas for improvement.

Data Analysis

The data team have continued to deliver on key actions, providing analysis and support to schools and workstreams.

The availability of analysis has been improved following the launch of interactive data dashboards, created using PowerBI data visualisation software. These dashboards have replaced PDF reports which were previously shared via email. The initial phase on dashboards includes analysis of attainment, attendance, exclusions and demographics. The benefits of these dashboards are that staff are now able to produce their own analysis using report filters, can visualise key trends, and have easy access to all information provided by the team. It also improves the turnaround speed from the team receiving data and being able to share it with schools. To support the rollout of the data dashboards, a number of online demo sessions were delivered by the team. These sessions aimed to inform staff about the types of information available on the dashboards and to provide advice and support on how they could best utilise them. The team ran 7 sessions for 63 members of staff, with 73% of schools attending. Feedback on the dashboards and the training sessions were positive with staff citing benefits of ease of use and a greater focus on visuals rather than tables.

In addition to dashboard demo sessions, a small number of pilot online training sessions were delivered with teaching staff. The purpose of these sessions was to progress the Dive into Data training programme and develop materials that could be used with class teachers. The sessions were delivered online via Teams and covered the key principles of how data could be used at a class level. A template for data conversations was also developed and shared as part of these sessions. Feedback from these sessions was positive however technical challenges and staff absences/ lockdowns have prevented further rollout of these materials.

Further support has been provided to schools on request during this period. The team have provided assistance with updates to authority attainment trackers, managing data in health and wellbeing profiling tools and have developed engagement trackers for remote learning. 88% of primary schools have requested and received support from the team since August, although all have had access to shared tracking templates. In addition, analysis of historic trends in SQA data has been collated and shared with all secondary schools to support moderation activity for the 2021 alternative certification model.

Online training videos developed by the team in previous years have been updated to improve accessibility. For example, short demo videos which were previously included in a wider course have been split to allow quick access. In addition, Dive into Data training materials have been shared on the Data Literacy Glow page, which can act as a refresher to the course or as a starting point for discussions within schools. These videos all have associated guidance and datasets to allow for them to be followed as a package.

Reflections on what has worked well

The move to data visualisation software in place of static reports has been a significant improvement. Data dashboards have allowed the team to increase the scale of the analysis that is shared without creating large reports that are time consuming to read. Feedback from head

teachers indicates that having data displayed visually is easier to interpret and use and that having all analysis in one place is more manageable than multiple reports. This is an area of work which can be progressed further to improve the availability of evidence across the authority.

Improvements

The model of training delivery used within the Dive into Data session in the 2019/20 session does not suit online delivery models and therefore adaptions have been required. Sessions delivered live were focused around group discussions of data trends and sharing of practices within schools. This has proved challenging to replicate online and time has had to be spend adapting and testing different approaches. This has limited the progress of the rollout of these materials.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Despite the restrictions on in-person provision, staff from almost all schools have attended CLPL on effective learning and teaching in numeracy and mathematics including Numeracy Across the Curriculum, Promoting Mathematical Thinking, Bar Modelling, Numbertalks and S.E.A.L. Staff from almost all schools have participated in a range of online workshops and webinars highlighting effective learning and teaching in literacy and english including those offered by Education Scotland, the National Literacy Network and various universities.

Almost all secondary NQTs have taken part in training to help them understand their responsibility towards developing the numeracy skills of the young people in their classes, regardless of their own subject specialism. Almost all primary NQTs have taken part in training to help them plan for numeracy in a range of curricular contexts. Almost all secondary NQTs have attended online training in relation to disciplinary literacy and developing literacy skills across a range of subject areas. Almost all primary NQTs have taken part in training on the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach with a specific focus on raising attainment in reading and writing.

Building on our partnership with Winning Scotland and reflecting on the needs of schools in the current climate, a new course has been developed to help practitioners bring the research behind Mindset to life in their classrooms. The course has been co-authored by Renfrewshire and we are the first and only local authority in Scotland to take part in it. The course goes live in February 2021 and among the delegates are the Transition Team, who will take their learning into almost all secondary schools.

In order to support practitioners in identifying and closing gaps in numeracy, a Numeracy Intervention Programme has been developed that focuses on the use of continual formative assessment to identify the learner's stage of conceptual development. The programme will run with 5 – 8 schools this session and will be opened up to all schools in the next session. Of the schools

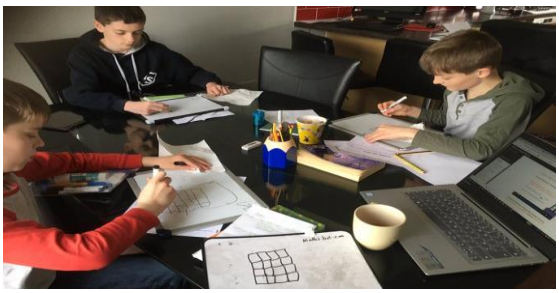
currently signed up, the majority are from quartile 2, where a gap in attainment has been highlighted.

A comprehensive programme of CLPL has been planned to embed and extend the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach between January and June. This includes courses on raising attainment in reading, raising attainment in writing, the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach and the Primary Literacy Coaching Programme. Professional learning has been targeted following analysis of attainment data.

Resources have been targeted to ensure greater support and challenge, particularly for S1 and S2 pupils, as the Dive into Reading approach has been extended to secondary practitioners.

Almost all primary schools have identified Literacy and Numeracy Champions, who support the development of evidence-based literacy and numeracy pedagogy within their school. Champions receive regular local and national updates.

A Secondary Moderation training pilot was planned to roll out across three participating Secondary Schools with an inter-school Moderation event in May 2020. Unfortunately, this was cancelled due to COVID 19. The education manager has been attending the West Partnership Moderation Network but much of the primary and secondary activity has been delayed due to the nature of this work.



Within the authority, education managers have been supporting Principal Teachers/Faculty Heads through the setting up of network meetings on a regular basis to facilitate the alternative model of certification for national 5, higher and advanced higher courses. This has included support in terms of moderation, assessment, cross marking and ensuring a robust system is in place regarding quality assurance across and within all schools.

Training has been put in place for formative assessment for all teaching staff across the authority. This included all sectors. This online support package was designed and developed in partnership with the Attainment Adviser and Education Scotland. This has been well received by a number of our establishments.

Building on the Exploring Pedagogy in Primary 1 training has taken place as planned, online rather than face to face sessions. 5 online sessions were delivered to Primary 3 teachers from 22 primary schools between Oct – Dec 2020.

Transition practitioners have received training in metacognition approaches and strategies, numeracy and maths learning and teaching and targeted intervention strategies. They have also engaged in a number of professional reading and dialogue sessions around assessment, transitioning back to school and the use of digital resources. They embed learned strategies into everyday practice.

The team are currently supporting 151 targeted pupils (cohort 4), as well as additional pupils identified as requiring ‘catch up’ support following the summer lockdown.

Development Officers continue to provide bespoke support to all schools and tailored support is requested.

Reflections on what has worked well

The uptake of online CLPL has been very positive with a combined attendance of 505 participants over 10 sessions. In post session evaluations 94% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the CLPL increased their knowledge of the content matter. 96% agreed or strongly agreed that attending the CLPL had developed their skills and abilities in relation to the session and 99% agreed or strongly agreed that attending the CLPL would have a positive impact on learning in their classroom.

The online model of supported study has been successful with those who have attended. There have been 148 unique attendees from 8 out of the 11 secondary schools. 94% of attendees said that the session they attended deepened their understanding of the concept being taught and 99% said they were likely or highly likely to attend future sessions. Some of the feedback from young people:

> *"Thank you so much for developing our understanding, it has helped me so much and has given me a bit more confidence in myself."*
>
> *"The worked solutions for each question are super helpful to see where I've gone wrong. The pop quiz was also great for interaction and refreshing last week's work. Very grateful for this."*
>
> *"Thank-you so much for coming online to help us, some people in my year have been self-isolating this week so being at home trying to learn maths has been so difficult but tonight has definitely helped me. I have a bit of belief in myself that I can do this, thank you."*

Transition teacher data shows that for most literacy and numeracy indicators, the team have been successful in maintaining cohort 4 levels of achievement from baseline (February 2020) to review 1 (December 2020), despite lockdown. Although achievement levels have not increased greatly.

Team and school observations have shown that their expertise in targeted intervention is an essential service, especially for those children and families where engagement has been a barrier this year.

Some parent comments are provided below:

> *"Haley has become more confident in herself and her learning is doing great in classes"*
>
> *"Myself and my child have found the transition to high school difficult. However, the support we have received from the transition teacher has been second to none"*
>
> *"I am very happy with the communication I am receiving from my son's transition teacher. She is keeping me well informed about my son's progress and he is happy with the support he is receiving also"*

In a recent target pupil questionnaire, almost all children strongly agreed that the transition teacher helped them to settle into S1 learning and helps them to know what skills to work on.

Improvements

Engagement in Numeracy/Maths and Literacy/English CLPL is far higher in the primary sector than it is in secondary. One factor in this as reported by PTs has been the constant focus on SQA assessment arrangements and reacting to the changing landscape of the 2021 exam diet.

Although uptake in CLPL session has been fantastic, it is difficult to get into schools to see examples of good practice and the impact that the professional learning has had on children and young people.

The global pandemic, restrictions on visits to schools and the move to online CLPL have all created significant challenges around supporting schools and engagement. As we adapt to this new way of working and adopt greater flexibility in approach, this is gradually becoming easier.

The curricular transition workstream works well where there is successful collaboration with school practitioners and where the team are given the opportunity to share and model their expertise. For example, a couple of schools in particular, have used working together with the workstream as an opportunity to upskill support staff (e.g. classroom assistants), in offering high quality targeted intervention.

More work is required to ensure that the workstream build capacity in curricular transition by working more collaboratively to provide professional learning to practitioners through modelling, and coaching.

Families and Communities

The RNRA approach is well established in over 90% of educational establishments in Renfrewshire across all sectors. EPS continue to support establishments in developing the approach; attending Core Groups and providing training and coaching virtually. 25 establishments have now achieved awards at one of the 4 levels of the RNRA accreditation framework. The approach has been very successfully extended to include the implementation of 'RNRA for Parents' group work initiative to support parents / carers of children or adolescents with violent or destructive behaviours incorporating Non-Violent Resistance (VR) approaches.

30 Renfrewshire establishments continue to engage well with PATHS coaching support offered to In-school Co-ordinators. All activities have now successfully moved online such as team teaching, modelling lesson delivery, parent information sessions, staff training events for a range of staff including all NQTs and Buddies training for P6 and P7 pupils in many schools. 150 classes across RC have attended a series of PATHS virtual assemblies.

6 secondary schools and 1 ASN school have progressed Parents in Partnership (PIP) activities such as sharing information with parents about S1 learning, supporting parents to engage in option choices, family learning activities and providing family learning packs.

Pizza Learning has been re-designed to move online using devices and dongles secured from Connecting Scotland Digital Inclusion Initiative. All targeted families (18 families across 8 priority schools) have received learning packs and regular contact from staff to build relationships and maximise participation in the programme. Staff have trained as Digital Champions with Connecting Scotland to increase their own skill set to re-design the programme as well as being able to provide support directly to families. Story Videos have been recorded and uploaded to privately hosted YouTube Channel to allow participating families to view before sessions. Weekly phone calls for each family after sessions ensures feedback is collected re the new Pizza Reading Online Programme.

A full team of Inclusion Support Assistants are now working across 9 secondary schools, collectively they engage with 108 young people and families 85% of whom are from SIMD 1-3 group. Quantitative data is collected and considered at an individual school and whole service level. This information currently demonstrates positive trends in all the key objectives of:

- Improving attendance
- Reducing exclusions
- Increasing parental engagement

To capture additional qualitative data case studies are currently being developed to demonstrate the impact these practitioners have on outcomes for young people and families. There will be a focus on individual work and also how this enhances and complements the work of wider pastoral care teams in schools. Case studies will also reflect the diversity of the ISA role which is considered a strength of the post.

In the period August 20 – January 21, the Language Bank has provided:

- 30 face to face interpreting interviews
- 25 written translations to enable families and schools to share information, report on pupil progress, facilitate 2-way communication, support access to benefits, and further develop language skills.

The Glasgow Science Centre Learning Lab provides a unique education programme that supports high quality STEM learning in the classroom and at home. All teachers involved have engaged in the CLPL activity integral to the programme to increase teachers' confidence in STEM learning. Highlights include:

- 10 primary schools participated
- 22 teachers and 530 pupils across Renfrewshire have completed the GSC Learning Lab's.
- 13 virtual engagement sessions with experts delivered; and
- An additional 10 schools involving 21 teachers and approximately 500 children are currently involved.

Reflections on what has worked well

An evaluation of RNRA indicated that the approach has had a positive impact on staff's practice; and a positive effect on the social, emotional and behavioural development of pupils in the primary and secondary sectors. RNRA continues to have a strong impact on wellbeing in the majority of establishments across Renfrewshire. Individual establishments are able to provide evidence of impact through their RNRA Action Plans and accreditation information. The aim is that all RNRA establishments will be confident in using Quality Improvement Methodology and applying impact evaluation measures in their action plans. Progress has been made, and this remains a focus for future development.

Initial feedback from The Skills for Recovery programme suggests that a high percentage of teaching staff have found this resource easy to use. A high percentage also report that pupils are using some of the wellbeing strategies taught. Similarly, a high percentage of children and young people report that they found the programme useful and have tried out some of the strategies suggested.

24 families have complete RNRA for parents' programme with a high level of engagement and success. This will now be extended to a further 24 families.

PIP Co-ordinators report that parents are being supported primarily through phone contacts and that, as a result of a renewed focus on the home-school relationship, positive relationships are being developed and nurtured. ISAs continue to support the work of pastoral care teams in supporting the most vulnerable learners.

Feedback regarding online Pizza Reading has been positive with Headteachers commenting:

> *"The new plan is really carefully thought out in terms of not only the content but also the supports and scaffolds to help engagement and build confidence"*
>
> *"As well as all the usual benefits of the family learning programme, I think it will really help families to develop technical skills to support them navigating the new way of working we all find ourselves caught up in"*

Parents have provided positive feedback:

> *"Really appreciated the resources as a working mum I wouldn't have time to make things"*
>
> *"Been a boost for my wee girl"*
>
> *"Had a great time, books great for bedtime stories"*

"Kids love the books and are very into crafts"

"Read the books together as a family, brings family together"

In the GSC mid-term evaluation (Dec 20) all teachers said their expectations had been fully met, commenting that:

"The 'ready to go' resources were very well organised and structured"

"The lessons and resources were very varied and as a result, pupils remained engaged"

Improvements

The Build Back Better resources were mainly used by establishments to support children and young people. Some establishments used them to support staff wellbeing, and a smaller number to support parents' wellbeing. In response to feedback EPS are streamlining the aspects relating to staff and parents' wellbeing, making the existing materials as accessible and easy for establishments to use as possible. Adapted resources will be shared in the near future.

The barriers around online family learning continue. This is an area that PIP coordinators and ISAs are attempting to improve through sharing practice and supporting families to access platforms confidently.

The lack of corporate IT equipment for Pizza Learning staff working remotely has been a huge barrier as sessional staff had to use their own personal devices to engage and work with families in virtual groups. Limited or no family IT devices and/or internet access has been a significant barrier, preventing families from fully participating in online programme. The anticipated delivery of devices and dongles from Connecting Scotland for Pizza Learning families should address this. It is planned when devices are delivered to families, each family will have an online session with a digital champion to help them build their skills and confidence using laptop/chrome book.

Health and Wellbeing

We continue to focus relentlessly on improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families. This has been particularly important in light of the current pandemic which has exacerbated the mental health challenges experienced by some individuals and families. Improvements are evident in practitioner's confidence, knowledge and practice in supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. This has been achieved through a range of high-quality professional learning opportunities, support services and through the development of supportive strategic policy and guidance.

Place2Be continue to provide very good school-based counselling services in 7 primaries and 1 secondary school. These services are supporting improvements in the emotional wellbeing of

children, young people, staff and families. Furthermore, Place2Be provided highly evaluated professional learning and consultation sessions on 'Creating a mentally healthy school' for senior leaders and class teachers in targeted primary and secondary schools.

Place2Be have reviewed their processes and policies to provide a flexible service to ensure continued support for children and young people during this period of remote learning. For primary-aged children receiving 1-1 therapeutic counselling, individual discussions have taken place with the parents/carers to set up virtual or remote engagement sessions to meet the needs of children and their families. Where it is safe to do so, for vulnerable children in primary schools, there may continue to be delivery of face to face therapeutic intervention for those children still attending school during lockdown. The work of Place2Be in secondary schools was showcased at an online webinar in December 2020 at which both the Place2Be CEO and the Regional Director for Scotland joined school staff and pupils of to highlight the positive impact of the service in Paisley Grammar school.

Almost all teachers who delivered the 'Living Life to the Full' (LLTTF) programme in 7 targeted secondary and special schools have emerging skills and confidence in using this cognitive behavioural therapy approach to develop emotional literacy and resilience in young people through the life skills programme. Feedback from the teachers and young people involved in the lessons has been largely positive and has allowed schools to work together with the HWB Development Officer and our Educational Psychology Service to evaluate the programme and make adaptations to the materials to meet the needs of each context this session. LLTTF will now be delivered in all of our secondaries after our remaining schools completed their leadership training online in September 2020. Staff trained included pastoral teachers, senior leaders and colleagues from Educational Psychology. Our new schools will be mentored by colleagues from our cohort trained last year.

Last session 7 schools and over 200 staff received LGBT training as part of their work towards the Charter award. Evaluations indicate an improvement overall with staff reporting an increased understanding and awareness of what LGBT young people experience, particularly with regards to their identity and the language used. In addition, staff stated an increase in their confidence in how best to support an LGBT young person. The Education Capacity Building Officer from LGBT Youth Scotland shared that "it's genuinely inspiring how hard all the teachers are working. I can see the commitment from the staff and pupils driving this work forward is seen as valuable, which in these times is such a testament to each school community and their values." Our schools have developed LGBT inclusive curricular work, inclusive picture story books, updated their libraries and are collaborating with local community groups. Junior pupils in one of our secondary schools linked with pupils from P5-7 in one of their feeder primaries to run a joint 'Rainbowfest' event. To date, 3 of our schools have achieved the Silver Award and 3 schools have achieved Bronze. New schools are coming on board to begin their Charter journey while current schools are progressing to the next stage of the award.

The HWB Development Officer continues to impact very positively in identifying Renfrewshire mental health and wellbeing priorities, working to address priorities, and in forging effective

partnerships. The work has included increasing staff knowledge, skills and confidence when delivering the HWB curriculum through a variety of professional learning experiences for staff and pupils including understanding self-harm and suicide (Ask,Tell), Hive of Wellbeing, Seasons for Growth, CEOPS and Mentors in Violence Prevention. All sessions have been evaluated highly. Very strong connections have been established with key partners across Children's Services, Health and Social Work as well as external agencies who support our ambition to improve HWB outcomes for children and young people. Our Health and Wellbeing blog as well as monthly health and wellbeing newsletters and Twitter page @RenEdHWB are used to signpost school staff to professional learning opportunities, share good practice, provide information about services and celebrate successes.

To support the wellbeing of children, young people, staff and parents on their return to school after the summer break, the HWB Development Officer collaborated with the Educational Psychology team to develop a 'Skills for recovery' programme for use in primary and secondary schools. This digital 'lift and go' resource laid out in 6 weekly themes, was carefully considered to communicate what it is that we wanted adults and children to hear and feel from their school environment in the weeks following their transition back from lockdown. As well as content for children and young people, this resource also focussed on the wellbeing of staff and parents. Links to Skills for Recovery resource: staff, pupils and parents. Initial feedback from schools has been very positive. An evaluation of the impact of the resource is currently underway.

For children and young people who are self-isolating/remote learning, further support resources have been developed which focus on regulating feelings and specifically 'What you need to know' and 'What you need to do'. There is also information which signposts supports available to young people. A version suitable for sharing with parents was also developed providing information and signposting for help.

Wellbeing when isolating – Pupils

Wellbeing when isolating – Parents

The resources have been developed on Sway and can therefore be shared easily on schools' digital platforms. Since the launch of the self-isolation Sways in mid-November they have been viewed over 3,000 times by young people and parents. Pastoral support is available for secondary young people who require to self-isolate through our Subject Support Surgery. Our Health and Wellbeing Development Officer is available to support any young person who wishes wellbeing support from a Pastoral Support Teacher.

Effective collaboration between the HWB Development Officer, Attainment Advisor and Renfrewshire Youth Voice, led to an extensive consultation exercise being carried out with over 350 children and young people across primary and secondary schools in relation to Personal and Social Education (PSE). Findings have been collated and are being used to inform the development of a 'Framework for Personal and Social Education in Renfrewshire' in collaboration with other local authorities across the West Partnership. The HWB Development Officer leads a subgroup of the West Partnership HWB workstream to develop this PSE framework further. In order to support staff delivering remote learning around health and wellbeing, resources have been identified that contain 'lift and go' lessons which can be delivered virtually or shared via digital platforms. The can be viewed here: PSEresources.

Colleagues from the central team as well as many school staff have participated in professional learning, provided by Education Scotland, on the 'Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile' tool. This is a tool to measure a young person's motivation and sense of wellbeing in the learning context

linked to GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators. Several schools were keen to use the tool this session and as a result, the HWB Development Officer is coordinating primary and secondary focus groups who are sharing information around its implementation and the use of wellbeing data to inform and improve our practice.

In partnership with colleagues from Health and Choose Life we have developed a guidance document to support establishments 'Guidance for adults working with children and young people at risk of self-harm and suicide' and updated our policy for educational establishments on 'Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education'.

Reflections on what has worked well

In the period August - December 2020, Place2Be have provided:

- 849 drop-in sessions for 468 pupils;
- 447 one-to-one intensive counselling for 56 pupils;
- 133 sessions for parents and
- 339 consultation sessions for staff.

Some feedback is detailed below;

> *"Talking to Place2Be during lockdown helped me feel less worried and more calm." (Primary Pupil)*
>
> *"I have never been able to share this with anyone before now. It feels such a relief, like a weight has been lifted from my shoulders." (Secondary Pupil)*
>
> *" I'm so happy he has you in the school. I don't have to worry as much knowing he can come talk to you." (Carer of a pupil who uses Place2Talk)*
>
> *"It was so good to know you were there for that phone call each week, even through the chaos of lockdown. I had my parents to talk to, but they were going through their own stresses so knowing that there was someone who cared and would listen really helped me during that time." (Secondary Pupil)*

Through review of establishment improvement plans, and qualitative evidence gathered during Quality Improvement visits to all establishments, it is clear that improving mental and emotional wellbeing is a priority for all establishments. Effective and interesting practice is gathered and shared through our highlights video in the monthly Health and Wellbeing newsletter. Find here

All providers of professional learning have carried out evaluations to assess the early impact of their work:

- Both staff and pupils who have participated in MVP training report an increased knowledge around issues related to gender-based violence and coercive relationships with pupils sharing their previous lack of knowledge around the law in relation to consent.
- All participants in the Ask,Tell sessions rated the experience very useful or extremely useful. Participants of 'ASIST a conversation', developed over the past few months, valued the opportunity to refresh their knowledge around the ASIST model in order to build staff confidence and skills in relation to supporting those experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- 50 staff were trained to deliver the Seasons for Growth seminars across Renfrewshire. 150 staff and over 1000 pupils participated in the seminars.

3 schools have achieved the Silver Award and 3 schools have achieved the Bronze Award as part of the LGBT Charter Award.

Leadership

Despite covid restrictions, much of the planned leadership work for session 2020-21 has gone ahead using a virtual platform, ensuring we continue to build on existing leadership capacity in our schools and early years centres. Plans for our pupil leadership programme have had to be completely postponed.

Both secondary and primary Aspiring PT courses were cancelled following consultation with all those involved in the delivery of the programmes. It was overwhelmingly felt that the value of these courses would be diminished if not delivered face to face with participants. Workload, in relation to the ongoing covid pandemic, was also a concern at the beginning of the session.

It was hoped at the outset that by postponing the delivery of the Aspiring DHT course until January 2021 that face to face delivery would be possible. However, a change to online delivery was agreed in December 2020 following the Scottish Government's announcement of ongoing restrictions. This course will now run between Jan- Apr 2021. 26 staff have signed up for the course – 8 secondary, 14 primary, 1 ASN and 3 early years.

2 external education consultants are providing 7 online Leadership Learning sets to groups of primary and secondary deputes – 1 set will be HTs who have not participated previously (44 participants in total).

4 primary headteachers are participating in the bespoke one to one coaching sessions (online) with James Keegans.

As a support to our leaders during the initial months of the pandemic, informal, online drop-in sessions were provided by Drew Drummond of Drummond International. This allowed leaders across all establishments to discuss issues/concerns/difficulties they were experiencing in a safe space with their peers and Drew. Where necessary, these were followed up with one to one coaching sessions with Drew.

Step Back podcasts were made available to senior leaders from August to November 2020. These were short 10-minute podcasts, interviewing a variety of education staff. They were all asked the same 3 questions in order to provide their reflections, thoughts and support on the pandemic and its ongoing impact in our education settings. The podcasts could be accessed at any time, to remind senior leaders of the conversations and themes which where helpful on the initial Step Back Programme.

4 Step Back Virtual leadership workshops have been provided for those who have previously participated in the Step Back workshops. These include:

- The Moral Purpose of Education with Norman Drummond
- Permission to Feel with Sarah Philp
- Dealing with Trauma with James Docherty
- Holding onto the silver linings from the Covid-19 cloud with Daniel Goodwin

Between Aug 2020- Dec 2020, 4 schools participated in a reconnection day with Derek Gall as part of the CANI Pupil Leadership Programme to create a well-designed structure to build leadership capacity within the school community.

7 secondaries signed up for the 2020-21 residential programme which we were hopeful would take place early 2021. As it became clear this was not going to happen due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, in-school Goal Attainment Programmes were established for Jan-Mar 2021. However, due to the current further lockdown, all pupil leadership plans have been postponed until session 2021-22

To date, no progress has been made in relation to the proposed Leadership Sustainability work.

Reflections on what has worked well

Formal evaluation of all leadership activity will take place from March 2021.

Due to the online nature of most of the leadership work this session, technical difficulties are regularly encountered e.g. participants not being able to get into meetings, break out rooms failing and screen sharing difficulties. The digital team have been very supportive in helping to resolve issues.

Online delivery of the one to one coaching sessions and Learning Sets is going well with only slightly less time required as it is difficult to engage with a screen for lengthy periods of time. Due to the necessity to use online platforms, staff have become much more familiar and confident in their use since August.

Those delivering the above and the Aspiring Deputes course, do acknowledge the limitations of working online and feel that relationships cannot be built with participants to the same degree. Similarly, relationships between participants in smaller break out groups are not as successful as they would be if delivered face to face.

The first virtual Step Back session was extremely well received by Heads. The timing of the session allowed Heads to discuss a variety of issues and successes over the period Aug – Dec 2020. Informal feedback from Heads also reaffirmed the feelings of being valued and supported by the local authority

Improvements

Technical issues and knowledge have improved since August 2020, making online leadership sessions more successful. The digital team has been extremely supportive with the virtual Step Back work.

Sharing content and presentations with participants beforehand has also supported the success of online leadership sessions.

Care Experienced Children and Young People

All our projects have continued during the current pandemic with some adjustments undertaken to ensure they are compliant with Health and Safety requirements and Covid restrictions.

Key highlights from the Aberlour Attain Mentoring Service include:

- 61 children and young people are currently being supported
- 72 volunteers are currently available with 28 being Renfrewshire Council staff
- 10 further volunteers who began virtual training in January

Aberlour Mentors have continued to work with all the children referred to them, and have tailored the support to suit their needs, and current circumstances including face to face when restrictions permit. More recently, they held a 'Big Night In' where we invited all the supported children and

young people to join us online for an evening of games, activities, and the chance to give us feedback on the Attain Service. 16 children and young people from 8 – 18 years joined us, and everyone engaged so well. The team have supported some further applications for the Urgent Assistant Funds which were successful. The team also sourced two tablets for young people as well as a mobile WIFI device and some data, for children who had no access to a laptop or tablet at home.

The SPACE team has continued to deliver a service to young people and work in partnership with schools and parents throughout the pandemic and has been flexible and responsive to an ever-evolving situation. The team is currently working at full capacity supporting over 60 cases with daily engagement with young people which has been very positive. Staff have provided support such as transporting young people to school during lockdown restrictions. Over the last year, 20 cases have closed with positive outcomes and 4 progressing on to further education.

NVR which is an approach to reduce child to adult violence and relational aggression has continued to be rolled out in selected schools and social work teams. Foster carers and other social work staff have attended training courses. In addition to the staff who are being trained as accredited NVR trainers we are also putting some staff through a training for trainers' approach to boost capacity. In addition, 24 parents recently completed the training virtually and a further 24 parents will be involved in upcoming training. Parents feedback of the experience will contribute to the overall evaluation.

Extensive feedback has been received from young people, practitioners and families and the impact of the service is demonstrated through these quotes:

> *"The flexibility of approach, even with the pupils themselves has led to success for pupils in our school e.g. supporting complex hub needs in school setting, taking time to speak to the child in their home setting and getting to know them better, taking the child out into the community to help build their cultural capital with experiences they may have missed out on due to circumstances" (Depute Head Teacher)*
>
> *"Since meeting K. F. I have been calmer and happier, K. F. has taught me new coping skills she makes me feel safe and less anxious about high school, she helps me when I feel down I trust her and confide in her. I still need Katie and would like to keep working with her she understands me very well she's amazing." (Young Person)*
>
> *"Having worked with the SPACE project with one of my families, the difference the support has given them has been fantastic. With many services, the worker is there to support the either the parent or child. With this project, the worker supports and advocates for both the*

Mum and child which has been a real asset to the family and indeed the wider care plan" (Social Worker)

Dolly Parton Imagination Library has grown significantly:

- 255 children benefit from the programme.
- 188 children currently registered
- 67 have graduated from the programme (on their 5th birthday)

We continue to get new requests from Social Workers and from our pilot pre 5 centres. Riverbrae was added to pilot centres in November and the children started to get books in December. The Depute Head of Centre in Riverbrae is carrying out a survey with the parents to get feedback on this.

It is unfortunate that as a result of the pandemic we have not been able to engage with the pilot sites due to Covid as there were lots of small events planned in connection with the books.

Comments from those participating are detailed below:

> "Thank you for your time and this excellent opportunity. Some of our children are not at their chronological/developmental age, developmentally they are younger. A picture book a flap lifting book, a touch and feel or interactive books are always a safe resource. The books look great and I think if we go with the year below their chronological year then that will be fab they will be able to get the most out of this programme. We are very grateful for this lovely opportunity" (Head of Centre)

> *"I have been receiving the imagination library books for my wee boy they have really helped with his speech delay. I have moved address and I would really appreciate it if the books can be sent to my new address. My wee boy absolutely loves them and the difference in his speech since getting them is just amazing. It really is brilliant he gets excited for them coming in the post his favourite so far is gorilla loves vanilla" (Parent)*

In addition to the main workstreams outlined above, work has continued in relation to planning a service wide conference albeit this will now be on a virtual platform. Plans have significantly developed and keynote speakers are now being identified to host their themed session.

We are also in the initial stages of setting up a tutoring bank and have delivered several bespoke interventions for young care leavers which includes Samba La Bamba and online art courses.

Reflections on what has worked well

Effective partnership working between education and social work continues to be the key to the success of our work to date. The implementation of NVR is a good example of how we have taken a system-wide approach to reducing the incidence of child to adult violence. By having teachers, social workers, parents and foster carers all trained in the same approach, we can ensure consistency of response to these challenging behaviours.

As projects have bedded in and become established, we have begun to see the real benefit of the these.

In particular it has been heartening to see the progress that the Aberlour mentoring support project has made after a difficult start overall in terms of recruitment. Children have fed back to Aberlour that their mentors have been a "lifeline" to them and have been someone they could turn to when things got really difficult at home and at school. This has been especially important when other

services that they normally access face to face are not currently being delivered in the same way (i.e. CAMHS, family support services, Young Carers groups).

The S.P.A.C.E team focus on improving attendance and health and wellbeing. A sample of 11 children and young people indicated that prior to S.P.A.C.E intervention, attendance ranged from 0%-90% which increased to 59%-100% post-intervention. For example, one young person was out of school for over and year half and returned to fulltime education in January after intensive intervention with the S.P.A.C.E team. Along with attendance, the number of exclusions for some children also dropped. Case studies have been developed and can be shared to demonstrate impact for each young person.

One of the most important reflections to make is that the workstreams are progressing because the individuals involved are passionate and committed to improving outcomes for care experienced young people. The Pandemic perhaps hasn't had the impact it might have as a result of this and also because of the things we choose to focus on which in the main were relationship-based activities.

Improvements

There remains concern about the temporary nature of the funding but all involved recognise that there is little that can be done about this although it is a particular issue for staff retention.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges with ongoing restrictions, we continue to be focused and committed to closing the poverty related attainment gap while raising attainment for all. This report demonstrates the extensive work which has been achieved this session. Feedback, case studies and sketch notes provide further evidence of the impact that each project is having on attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing.

The programme has successfully adapted to ensure the needs of all learners, practitioners, families and communities are supported. The central team have engaged in a series of intensive planning days which are designed to identify priorities for the next financial year. In Renfrewshire, our children, young people and staff are at the heart of everything we do and we will ensure that there is no poverty of aspiration, ambition or opportunity for children and young people.

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Scottish Attainment Challenge Impact Report 2015-2020**

1. Summary

1.1. This purpose of this report is to summarise the key points from the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Impact Report for Renfrewshire (appendix 1). The report covers a five-year period between 2015 and 2020.

1.2. Renfrewshire became one of nine challenge authorities in 2016. The overarching aim of the Attainment Challenge is to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

1.3. As part of the overall scrutiny of the programme, the local authority in collaboration with Education Scotland produced a five-year report providing detail and evidence to thirty-four questions.

1.4. The purpose of the report was to provide qualitative and quantitative answers to three high level questions regarding the impact of SAC within each local authority:

- How has the implementation of SAC impacted upon the culture and systems of local authorities to ensure those cultures and systems are equitable for children, young people and families affected by poverty?
- How has SAC positively impacted upon, or contributed to, educational outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty?
- Which lessons have been learned and what are the future priorities for SAC?

1.5. The report describes transformational changes, improvements in outcomes for children and young people, specific funding streams, lessons learned and future priorities and includes case studies.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note the contents of the report.

3. Background

3.1. The Scottish Government's ambition is for Scotland to be the best place to grow up. To achieve this, there is a need to raise attainment and reduce educational inequity for all of Scotland's children and young people. Attainment is the measurable progress which children and young people make as they advance through and beyond school.

3.2. However, there continues to be a gap between the progress which is made by those living in Scotland's least and most deprived areas. The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge in February 2015 to bring these issues to the fore and provide a greater sense of urgency and priority to address them across the education system. SAC funding has been available to local authorities and schools to support this vision since 2015.

3.3. Renfrewshire became a challenge authority in 2016 to close the poverty related attainment gap and raise attainment for all.

3.4. In 2019, the SAC programme in Renfrewshire was inspected by Education Scotland and was the first authority to be described as making "excellent progress" in relation to closing the poverty related attainment gap. This impact report builds on this excellent progress.

4. Progress

4.1. In December 2020, Education Scotland link Attainment Advisors worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- A well-structured programme management ensuring clearly defined approaches.
- Partnership working to enhance impact including co-ordinated approaches in the sharing of data.
- A sector leading approach to professional learning including a highly effective leadership programme and a programme for classroom assistants.
- Evidence-based approaches to the teaching of literacy have led to delivery of a high-quality literacy curriculum.
- Very good moderation activities provided across the authority.
- Staff are skilled at recognising and addressing the impact of poverty on families.

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy in the Broad General Education (BGE) has improved over time and the authority continues to perform above national averages with decreasing poverty-related attainment gaps across all stages and an increase in positive destinations for leavers from areas of highest deprivation

- The voices of children and young people are shaping improvements across the authority.

- The development of a parental engagement strategy has been a key focus to support establishments with their planning around parental engagement.

- The authority's approach to the use of data to inform all aspects of its work has led to the development of a positive data culture.

- Increased opportunities to work in partnership within, across and out with the workstreams including with a range of academic partners have been impactful.

4.2. Next steps for the programme include:

- Establishing a 'Virtual School' approach towards supporting care experienced children and young people.

- Continuing to develop collective impact approaches.

- Continuing work to align systems and processes to ensure data accuracy through the ongoing data matching work.

Implications of this report

1. Financial
None

2. HR and Organisational Development
None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is fair	-	*None*
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	-	*None*
Working together to improve outcomes	-	*None*

4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

(a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
Not applicable.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1: None.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Lauren Johnston, Project Manager, 0141 618 4023, lauren.johnstone@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Children's Services
LJ/JC
13/04/2021

Author: Lauren Johnston, Project Manager, 0141 618 4023.

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: A report on progress 2016-2021

March 2021

THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE
LITERACY NUMERACY HEALTH & WELLBEING

Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

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Ministerial foreword

As was set out in our National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan, 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, and also equity, so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed. This vision is shared across the education sector and, in support of that, this government set a defining mission of closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

There are many strengths in Scottish education, and I see evidence of those on a daily basis. The collective response to the pandemic has been outstanding, with all parts of the sector demonstrating commitment, professionalism and compassion to support the needs of our children and young people.

Despite these strengths, the attainment gap has remained a feature of our society for generations and does not do justice to the type of Scotland we wish to build. That is why we set ourselves the bold but necessary ambition of substantially eliminating the attainment gap within 10 years, while also making demonstrable progress during the lifetime of this parliament. There was a need to bring more light, urgency and focus to this issue. Nothing is more important than ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed in education, regardless of their background.

Over the last five years, we have put in place a comprehensive range of measures to turn the corner with the attainment gap. These have been built around the flagship Scottish Attainment Challenge, but also feature throughout our wider education policies, relentlessly focusing efforts on driving up improvements in education and reducing the impacts of deprivation on educational outcomes.

As we have made this sustained investment, the social, economic and political context in which we are living has changed enormously. The UK Government's rigid approach to austerity has meant that we have had to work even harder to offset

these challenges. The UK's exit from the EU, alongside the uncertainty caused in recent years, will mean those pressures continue. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a profound impact on every aspect of our lives. Despite this background, our key purpose has not changed and indeed remains more important than ever. Now, more than ever, there is a need to stay the course with our vision of equity and excellence.

I am greatly encouraged by the progress that has been made over the last five years. The strength of evidence demonstrates that positive progress has been made towards achieving our short and medium-term outcomes and, I believe, strong foundations are now in place to help us achieve our long-term ambition of closing the poverty-related attainment gap. There is still work to do but I am confident that we are on the right path.

We deliberately injected ambitious timelines into our stretch aims – it would have been a dereliction of duty to do otherwise. Our next task will be to reflect on what more is required to deliver a step change in the pace of existing improvement. The evidence set out in this report, bringing together a range of analyses for the first time, will help us to understand where that further support and focus is required.

Building on existing progress, we will continue to work in partnership with local authorities, schools and other partners to facilitate, broker and support action. Concepts of empowerment and collaboration, where decisions about children and young people's education are made as close to them as possible, will continue to be a driving force for positive change.

In conclusion, let nobody be in any doubt that I am wholeheartedly committed to continuing to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap beyond this parliamentary term. We have already committed to over £200m in Attainment Scotland Funding in 2021/22, building on the £750m invested over the course of this Parliament. That unwavering commitment will continue beyond 2021/22, and we will draw on our findings from this report, the recent Equity Audit and elsewhere to guide our thinking. As we do we will ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their backgrounds.

John Swinney MSP
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
March 2021

THE PROGRESS TOWARDS CLOSING the poverty-related attainment gap

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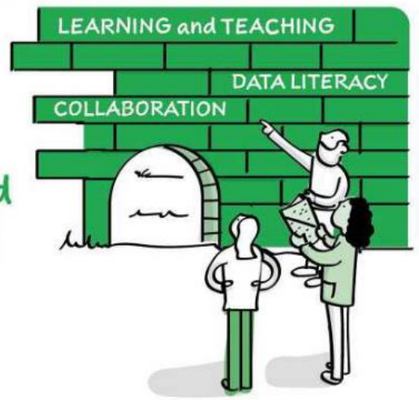
THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE
LITERACY NUMERACY HEALTH & WELLBEING

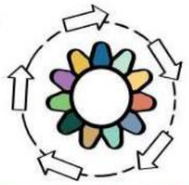
1

ACROSS SCOTLAND ATTAINMENT GAPS ARE NARROWING between the most and least disadvantaged



POSITIVE INDICATIONS of PROGRESS across the country

PISA 2018 - background has less of an impact on attainment now than it did in 2009

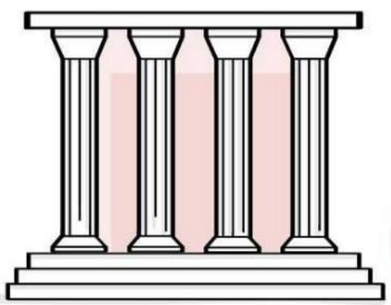


STEADY BUT VARIABLE PROGRESS over 5 years across the 11 NIF measures

2 EMPOWERMENT

through SAC and Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) is closing the poverty-related attainment gap

POSITIVE IMPACT EVIDENT IN SCOTLAND'S MOST DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES



STRONG FOUNDATIONS created to help achieve the programme's long-term outcomes

9 in 10 SCHOOLS report an improvement in closing poverty related attainment gaps

3 Widespread FOCUS ON EQUITY

SYSTEMIC CHANGE in terms OF CULTURE AND ETHOS increasingly evident

APPROACHES TO EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE becoming embedded and sustained

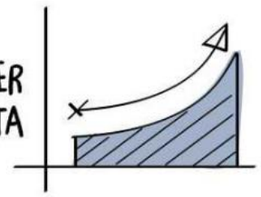
HEADTEACHERS confident when choosing suitable approaches

LOCAL AUTHORITIES accountable and driving forward a strategic vision for equity

4 IMPROVED WAYS OF WORKING

Targeted HEALTH AND WELLBEING approaches

BETTER USE OF DATA



Higher quality LEARNING, TEACHING and ASSESSMENT

between local authority, schools and community strengthened

5

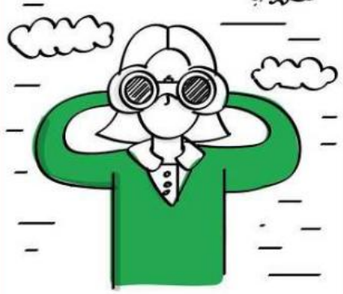
COVID-19 and school building closures has had an IMPACT

PROGRESS...

Focus now on accelerating and DEEPENING RECOVERY

CONCLUSION

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap IS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER



IT IS A LONG-TERM OUTCOME THAT REQUIRES ONGOING COMMITMENT AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

Executive Summary

A vision for closing the poverty-related attainment gap

The shared vision for Scottish education is to deliver excellence and equity for all, with the defining mission of closing the poverty-related attainment gap, ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed.

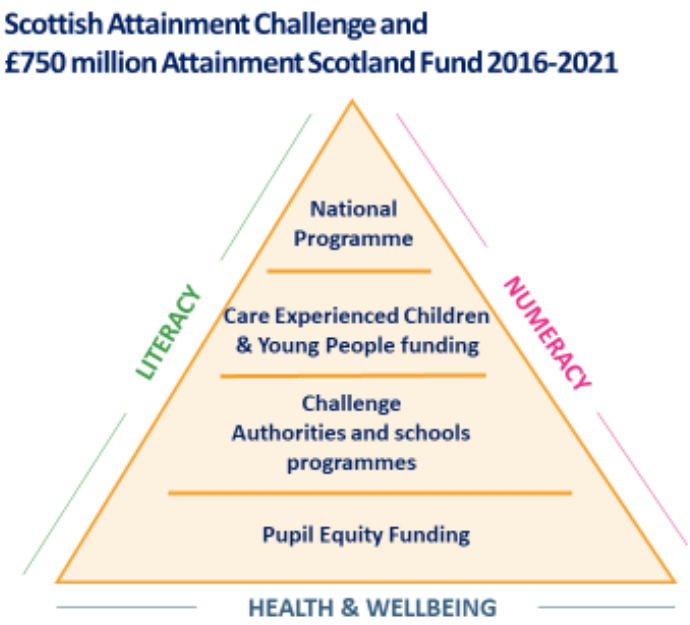
This is a long-term commitment and has been supported by a system wide, collaborative endeavour between all partners within Scottish education to make Scotland the best place to grow and learn.

Report on progress

This report presents the evidence of progress towards achieving this defining mission over the period of the parliament 2016-2021. In doing so it also acknowledges the disruptive and detrimental impact of COVID-19.

While referencing the broader policy landscape, particular focus is made to the central role of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) which was launched in February 2015.

The strategic aim of the SAC has been to 'close the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities'.



THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE
LITERACY NUMERACY HEALTH & WELLBEING

'Close the poverty related attainment gap'

The gap is closing, but it remains a long-term endeavour

The poverty-related attainment gap is closing, but this remains a complex and long-term endeavour. Equally, while there are positive indications of progress, there are also variations in the pace of that progress across the country. We know that the impact of COVID-19 is likely to have placed further pressure on the gap.

However, over the 5-year time period a number of key elements have been put in place that provide strong foundations for on-going progress. Important strengths of the Scottish approach include: a systemic change in terms of culture, ethos and leadership; a strengthened awareness of the barriers facing children and young people adversely affected by socio-economic disadvantage; the significant role of local authorities in driving forward a strategic vision for equity at local level.

It is notable that the most recent evidence from the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) acknowledged the progress that is being made in Scottish education to close the attainment gap through the SAC and wider education policies:

> "*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.*"

There are a range of improved ways of working to deliver equity. These include:

- Enhanced learning and teaching and using data for improvement
- A sustained focus on health and wellbeing
- Collaborative working
- Working with families and communities

We also know that one of the key features of the SAC is the flexibility and opportunity it offers to schools and local authorities to select, develop and create interventions that best work for children and young people in the local context. Because of this, the SAC has seen a wide range of interventions and approaches develop in different settings.

As a result of this activity, there has been demonstrable progress on a number of long-term measures to close the poverty-related attainment gap. Headteachers are positive about the impact of SAC in their school, have a clear understanding of what is working, and are optimistic about improvements being embedded and continuing over the next five years. Where the level of progress has been more varied, this has often been a result of attainment of those from the most deprived areas increasing but not at the same rate as those in least deprived areas. The greater rate of progress that can be seen at primary school level aligns with the implementation of the SAC, which initially focused support towards improvement activity within primary schools.

A range of wider data sources provides additional insight into the longer term benefits for young people. An increasing proportion of young people from the most deprived areas are:

- in education, employment or training
- in a positive initial and follow up destination after school
- are attending Higher/Further Education

The gap between young people from the most and least deprived areas has narrowed across all these measures. At the same time the percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination has consistently increased over the last ten years. However, the coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on destinations in the last year.

Reflecting on this progress to date provides an opportunity to consider further how we can accelerate and extend progress across all outcomes. This might include a focus on:

- A system-wide improvement strategy that promotes educational equity
- Maintaining a holistic and integrated approach
- Targeting to accelerate recovery and progress
- A renewed focus and a continued long term commitment

Going forward, the Scottish Government recognises that closing the poverty-related attainment gap will take time and remains committed to this task beyond this parliamentary term.

The evidence in this report, the Equity Audit and the views of partners, including the ICEA, and stakeholders, not least children and young people themselves, will be key to refining our approach going forward to accelerate recovery and progress and ensure all children and young people, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to succeed.

1. Introduction

A vision for closing the poverty-related attainment gap

The shared vision for Scottish education is to deliver excellence and equity for all, with the defining mission of closing the poverty-related attainment gap, ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed.

This is a long-term commitment and has been supported by a system wide, collaborative endeavour between all partners within Scottish education to make Scotland the best place to grow and learn.

In 2016, we set out that:

"*Ensuring educational excellence for all and closing the gap in attainment between young people from our most and least deprived communities will be the defining mission of the SNP in the next parliament.*"

This report now presents the evidence of progress towards achieving this defining mission over the period 2016-2021. In doing so, it also acknowledges the undisputed disruptive and detrimental impact of COVID-19 on progress, and also highlights key areas that will need to feature in the next steps of education recovery.

Report structure

Section 2 sets out the policy context and background related to the attainment gap. It provides an outline of the range of policy initiatives that contribute to closing the gap and, in particular, the central role of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and the associated Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF). It demonstrates how the SAC has evolved over the duration of the programme to date.

Section 3 outlines the type of interventions that have been designed to reduce the gap within schools and local authorities. It includes an emphasis on the development of interventions that that have been tailored to local needs and circumstances, as opposed to prescribing a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. It highlights a range of activities, spanning key areas such as literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, and family support.

Section 4 highlights how evidence, analysis and data has increasingly been at the heart of activities funded by the ASF. It makes reference to schools and local authorities drawing on a wide range of evidence and intelligence as part of selecting interventions, targeting approaches and in evaluation. Combined, it highlights how this commitment to data and evidence has helped to ensure they understand the effectiveness and impact of interventions.

Section 5 covers the progress made to date against a wide range of short- and medium-term outcomes. It covers indicators such as: awareness of approaches to achieving equity; culture and ethos; professional learning; collaboration; and data and evidence.

Section 6 shows the extent to which this progress on short- and medium-term outcomes currently translates to equivalent long-term outcomes. It draws on headteacher perspectives, attainment data and a range of wider data. It recognises that progress in closing the attainment gap has been made on a number of measures, although the level of progress across the measures is varied.

Section 7 then reflects on the impact of COVID-19 on priorities and ambitions. Specifically, it draws on key findings from the recent Equity Audit, as well as those derived from the ASF Year 5 evaluation. It provides some international context, local evidence, and cites a range of mitigations that have been implemented to date.

Finally, section 8 provides some concluding remarks. It summarises the key findings from earlier sections, and highlights a small number of reflections that may prove valuable as the commitment to closing the gap continues.

Additional information

The appendices include summaries of the progress made in the nine Challenge Authorities.

The supplementary tables also include a range of attainment and other data referred to throughout the report.

2. Policy context and background

A holistic approach to delivering excellence and equity

The vision and priorities for Scottish education are shared annually in the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2021 (NIF). The NIF is supported by the ongoing implementation of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

The shared vision of excellence and equity is defined as:

- **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;
- **Equity** through ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

The focus on equity in education is supported and complemented by a wide range of national policy initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people. These deal with issues both within and beyond the school and provide the holistic support that is necessary for children and families. These include:

- Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan
- Our transformative expansion of early learning and childcare
- Children's rights
- The Promise, and
- The Young Persons Guarantee

A Scottish education system rooted in empowerment and collaboration

In delivering this vision, schools leaders and practitioners are empowered, while working collaboratively with stakeholders, to make the decisions that most affect their children and young people's outcomes. It is our firm belief that an empowered and collaborative system, where everyone's contribution is heard and valued, is a necessary component in improving children and young people's outcomes.

To support this, in 2018 we established 6 regional improvement collaboratives to ensure the provision of educational improvement support to school leaders and practitioners through dedicated teams of professionals, drawing on support from Education Scotland, local authorities and others and delivering a relentless focus on improvement.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge

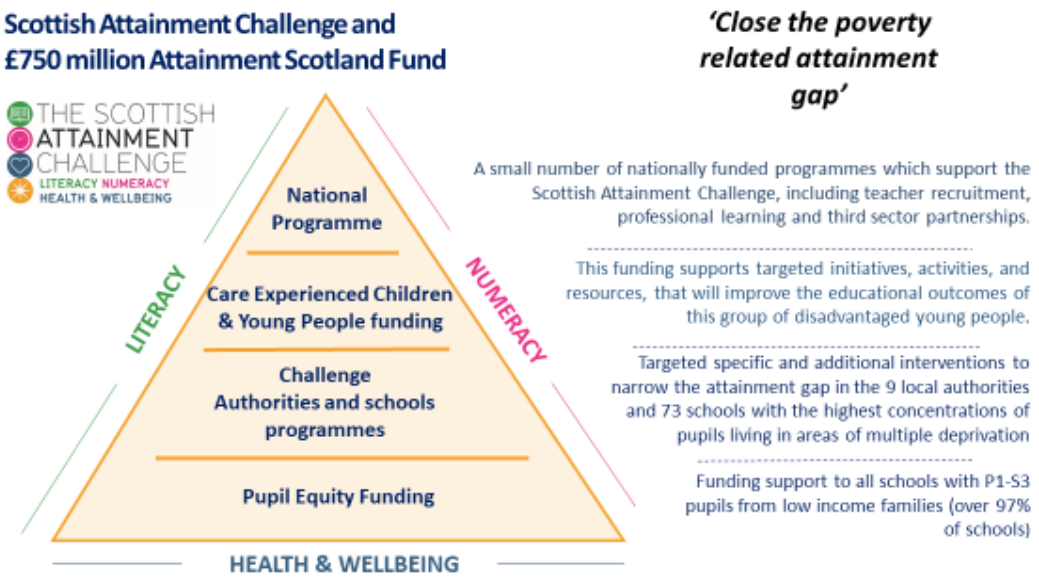
Central to the focus on delivering equity in education was the establishment of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, launched in February 2015.

The strategic aim of the SAC has been to 'close the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities'.

In order to deliver on the strategic aim, a number of short, medium and long-term outcomes were established to provide clear indicators of progress. The intention was to build strong and sustainable foundations within the education system recognising that improvements were likely to be gradual and incremental over time.

Prioritising improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing of those children adversely affected by socio-economic disadvantage, the SAC aims to empower schools to develop focused and innovative approaches to improving outcomes for children and young people. This is to be done at classroom, school and local authority level by undertaking approaches or interventions within three key organisers: teaching and learning; leadership; and families and communities.

The Attainment Scotland Fund provided an investment of £750 million over this parliamentary term, distributed across a number of programmes as outlined below.



Since 2015, the programme has been developed and extended to include more schools and local authorities. As investment increased the number of challenge authorities rose from seven to nine, the schools programme and universal offer evolved, and support for care experienced children and young people and PEF (Pupil Equity Funding) were introduced. In doing so, the programme expanded from

a narrow approach to close the attainment gap within a very specific locale, to a broader system-wide improvement strategy to promote educational equity.

Initially focusing on improvement activity in primary schools, the reach of the Challenge is now far wider, with targeted activity being delivered across both primary and secondary sectors and beyond. Today the SAC has five main strands with almost £190 million being invested in 2020/21**:**

- The ***Challenge Authority Programme*** provides additional resource to the nine local authorities in Scotland with the highest concentrations of deprivation (as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The 'Challenge Authorities' (seven in 2015, rising to nine 2016/17) are Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire. Profiles on these Challenge Authorities are provided in the appendix 2.
- The ***Schools Programme*** provides targeted support to an additional 73 individual primary and secondary schools in Scotland out with the nine Challenge Authorities who have the highest concentrations of pupils living in SIMD 1 and 2.
- ***Pupil Equity Funding*** (PEF) was introduced in 2017/18 and provides over £120 million directly to 97% of schools in Scotland based on the number of P1-S3 pupils registered for free school meals, used as a proxy measure for socio-economic disadvantage.
- The ***Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding*** was introduced in 2018/19 with funding allocated to all local authorities based on the number of looked after children they have in their care or schools aged between 5-15, but with the funding available to be invested to support all care experienced children and young people aged between 0-26.
- Additionally a number of ***National Programmes***, including a number of third sector organisations, have been supported for targeted work to raise attainment and improve equity.

The SAC approach drew from the lessons of the City Challenges in England (London and Manchester) and Challenge Cymru in Wales and introduced a team of Attainment Advisors (AAs) - centrally managed but locally based advisors, who provide a new and disruptive challenge and support function within the system. Scotland has 32 such AAs within Education Scotland’s regional improvement teams, and each Local Authority has direct access to a named AA.

The principal role of AAs is to ensure a relentless focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Their remit is to support local authorities and schools by providing advice and guidance, leading improvement and building capacity, and contributing to robust evaluation of impact. Their work is to drive a cultural shift in understanding poverty and the impact it can have on children’s and young people’s ability to learn and achieve. As systems leaders, AAs have an important role in ensuring social justice is at the heart of decision-making at national and local levels.

Support is also provided by The Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC). It encourages and supports the systematic application of

quality improvement (QI) thinking and methods to improve outcomes for children and young people across children's services.

Consistent with this approach, local authorities and schools have been key partners in the delivery of the SAC. The SAC has enabled schools and Challenge Authorities to develop targeted, creative and bespoke approaches to improving outcomes for children and young people adversely affected by socio-economic disadvantage, tailored to meet their local needs and circumstances. The significant investment provided through the ASF is considered by schools and local authorities to be vital in achieving the outcomes of the SAC.

Funding has been used by schools and Challenge Authorities to implement a wide variety of approaches designed to drive up improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The variety of approaches implemented by schools and Challenge Authorities reflects their diverse contexts and circumstances on which they have based their decisions. Challenge Authorities, which have collectively had a total of £212 million made available to them through the ASF since 2015, have used funding to develop strategic approaches at local authority level. Schools have used the flexibility of PEF, and in some cases additional funding received through the Schools Programme, to develop a range of different approaches tailored to their specific needs. This proved particularly important during the pandemic, where greater flexibility in the use of PEF funding allowed schools to rapidly adjust approaches to continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people.

Impact of COVID-19

It is widely accepted that the impact of COVID-19, and the period of school building closures, is likely to have made education inequality worse and more complex to tackle. These are impacts that are being experienced simultaneously in countries across the world. As highlighted by the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA), (2020), "The pandemic reinforces the issue of equity as the defining agenda of our time."

Cognisant of this, our Equity Audit (published in January 2021) helps to deepen our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, to outline the actions already taken to meet this challenge, and to set clear areas of focus for accelerating recovery.

The findings of the audit highlight the scale and potential depth of the impacts of the pandemic, and recognise that the full extent of those may not become fully visible for some time. They are fully integrated into this report.

3. Flexibility within schools and local authorities to develop tailored interventions.

A key feature of the SAC (and ASF) is the flexibility and opportunity offered to schools and local authorities to select, develop and create interventions that best work for children and young people in the local context. This chapter provides an overview of some of the interventions and approaches, looking at literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, and family support, developed in different settings.

Summary

- More than 9 out of 10 schools reported literacy interventions as part of their school's approach to closing the attainment gap. After the first year of the ASF, 235 **literacy** interventions and approaches were reported. These included literacy leaders and champions; innovative reading initiatives; one to one and group support; accelerated reading programmes; initiatives to create a literacy rich environment, and working with specialists including dyslexia support and speech and language therapists.

- 9 out of 10 schools had implemented **numeracy** interventions by Year 3 of the ASF. Examples included numeracy leaders and champions; new tools and approaches such as SEAL, Big Maths and Sumdog; cooperative learning strategy approaches; linking numeracy to wider STEM; and one to one and group support.

- 90% of headteachers reported that **health and wellbeing** approaches were part of their approach to closing the attainment gap, with many examples of innovative and collaborative practice. Interventions reported included taking a nurture approach; targeting support at key transition periods; breakfast and afterschool clubs; targeted support for young people with intersecting disadvantages; counsellors and health and wellbeing workers integrated within schools; outdoor learning and community gardens; musical and sport activities; and use of modes such as Neurosequential Model in Education and Growth Mindset.

- Over the period, there has been evidence of a shift in emphasis from individual school interventions towards the **development of local authority-wide approaches**. Examples of these approaches include whole school nurture approaches related to health and wellbeing, and Cost of the School Day projects which have developed in several Challenge Authorities.

3.1 Literacy interventions

More than 9 out of 10 schools reported literacy interventions as part of their school's approach to closing the attainment gap.

In Year 1 (2016/17) of the ASF, 235 Literacy interventions and approaches were reported. These included:

- literacy leaders and champions;
- one to one and group support – particularly around early literacy;
- approaches such as reciprocal reading and paired reading;
- new programmes or approaches such as Read Write Inc, POLAAR (Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource), VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectors, Openers and Punctuation), Ready Steady Read, Word Aware, Word Boost, The Literacy Shed and Rainbow Reading;
- accelerated reader (in secondary schools), active literacy, phonics based programmes, metacognitive work and creative vocabulary development;
- encouraging children to become enthusiastic about reading including creating a literacy rich environment, literacy hubs or (in one instance) having a resident author; and
- working with specialists including dyslexia support and speech and language therapists.

One local authority identified the need for an intensive reading intervention to improve young people's literacy skills. SAC funding enabled the appointment of an Education Support Officer (ESO) to lead, coordinate and evaluate literacy interventions in secondary schools. The ESO supported secondary staff with professional learning, coaching and modelling. A professional network was created and resources to support the reading intervention were also provided. The programme was a success and rolled out to primary pupils subsequently.

Local-authority wide approaches to literacy have developed alongside individual school interventions, with significant resource and innovation invested in supporting schools and practitioners to address the attainment gap in literacy with positive results.

One authority's innovative approach to improving children's and young people's attainment in literacy is supported by extensive professional learning for staff. It successfully empowers schools to prioritise the elements which suit their own context and has had a very positive impact across the authority. This has led to raised attainment in reading and writing, and a narrowing of the gap between the least and most deprived groups. Specialised training for classroom assistants in the literacy approach has improved their understanding, enhanced their roles and increased their job satisfaction. The approach has had a very positive effect on the ethos of schools and is now having a strong influence on other areas of the curriculum. [Challenge Authority Inspection].

3.2 Numeracy interventions

9 out of 10 schools reported numeracy interventions as part of their school's approach to closing the attainment gap.

Numeracy interventions weren't as common as those in literacy and health and wellbeing in the first two years of the ASF, with some local authorities and schools saying that numeracy interventions had generally started later. By Year 3, however, almost 9 out of 10 headteachers described numeracy interventions as part of their school's approach to closing the attainment gap.

Teachers participating in qualitative research felt that the ASF had helped to shift the way that they taught numeracy skills, using new approaches. Numeracy interventions included:

- numeracy leaders and champions;
- new tools or approaches including SEAL (Stages of Early Arithmetic Learning), Nurture Number, Big Maths, Play along Maths, Numberbug, Sumdog, Number Talks and Concrete Pictorial Abstract;
- learning approaches including cooperative learning strategies, problem solving and linking numeracy to wider STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) activities; and
- one to one numeracy support, small group support, extra maths periods (in secondary schools).

A Schools Programme local authority described a numeracy intervention menu created to support schools in selecting relevant interventions, as well as a numeracy 'equity and excellence' group which is supporting driving up numeracy attainment through focusing on pedagogical themes identified in research as raising numeracy attainment, linking this to professional learning and the development and roll out of a Closing the Numeracy Gap intervention.

As has been the case in literacy, councils have developed local authority wide approaches to addressing the attainment gap in numeracy. These approaches provide significant additional resource to schools, helping to develop skills and increase collaboration, and complementing school approaches.

In one local authority, two teachers in every primary and secondary school are trained in Maths Mastery. Feedback from teachers attending the training is that it has made them think differently about the methodology used to teach identified concepts and provided them with increased knowledge and understanding of how children learn. A Local Learning Community collaborative programme is developing maths/numeracy assessment and moderation approach, and teachers at key stages have engaged in visits to colleagues in other schools to review approaches and conduct assessments. [Challenge Authority Progress Report]

3.3 Health and wellbeing interventions

Teachers taking part in qualitative research felt that good health and wellbeing was critical in providing the foundation for learning and improved attainment.

In 2018, 90% of headteachers mentioned health and wellbeing approaches as being part of their school's approach to closing the attainment gap. Most responses referred to specific approaches or initiatives, and the staff training and engagement with external agencies to support these. This includes reference to nurture-based approaches, outdoor learning, play-based approaches, counselling and therapist services, and family support and engagement.

Many teachers taking part in qualitative research felt that good health and wellbeing was critical in that it provided the foundation for learning and improved attainment. This included addressing social and emotional needs, to ensure that children were able to attend school, enjoy school and be ready to learn.

Health and wellbeing interventions included:

- taking a nurture approach (with many mentioning learning from the model used in Glasgow);
- support at key transitions – between nursery, primary and secondary;
- breakfast and afterschool clubs, homework clubs and supported study;
- targeted support for young people including looked after children, children with English as an additional language and refugees;
- counsellors and health and wellbeing assistants integrated within the school, with early intervention for pupils with social or emotional behaviour issues;
- outdoor learning, Green Gyms and community gardens;
- approaches using music, dance, sport, physical activity, massage, relaxation, mindfulness and other techniques to provide positive experiences for pupils;
- use of models such as Neurosequential Model in Education, the ICE Pack training resource, growth mindset; and
- in secondary schools, support moving into positive destinations.

A local authority has developed extremely successful approaches and interventions to support health and wellbeing. Children's and young people's health and wellbeing have been significantly enhanced in schools where nurture principles have been embedded. In partnership with Barnardo's, the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PAThS) programme is being delivered in 28 primary schools to develop the emotional literacy and resilience of learners. In-class coaching and professional learning is significantly improving the confidence of teachers and support staff in teaching and supporting this area of health and wellbeing. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

A local authority described its approach to using play in pedagogical approaches. 52 schools are taking part in the programme, with training and school support visits taking place. Schools are expanding their approaches to the use of environments and sensory learning, and reducing the use of plastic resources in the classrooms. Staff report that children are achieving well in a wide range of areas. Many staff are delighted and surprised to see how confident, capable and imaginative children are and how they are seeing children in a way they never did in the past. They believe they know children better as individuals and as learners.

'Playful pedagogy has allowed our learners to develop confidence in taking ownership of their own learning. There are high levels of engagement in our classroom with children working both independently and collaboratively.' P1 teacher

Most teachers interviewed used a wide range of data and evidence to target their interventions, including:

- health and wellbeing data including Boxall profiles, wellbeing assessment plans, social, emotional and behavioural needs, care settings, child vulnerability, GIRFEC and SHANARRI indicators.

In one school, teachers evaluate health and wellbeing three times a year using SHANARRI indicators. Pupils self-evaluate using traffic lights to indicate how they are feeling each day. Teachers pick up on any amber or red lights, and meet with parents to address any issues. Teachers have noticed a change from red to amber, which is going in the right direction. [Challenge Authority Progress Report]

A local authority has established a wellbeing service whereby 12 schools have access to a Wellbeing Worker. 120 young people have been accessing the service on a weekly basis. Data analysis at the start of 2020 highlighted that, of pupils from SIMD 1 and 2 in all establishments, almost all remain “on track” or “have made “some progress” in identified learning outcomes/targets across literacy and numeracy. A review of the wellbeing tool used in the intervention showed that all young people accessing the service show improvements in social and emotional wellbeing. During the period of school building closures, all wellbeing workers transitioned to online support and telephone consultations, while three provided additional regular home visits to targeted families. [Challenge Authority Progress Report]

4. Systematic use of evidence to target interventions and maximise impact

Challenge approaches have been developed in a number of different ways, with local authorities supporting schools to target interventions, select the most appropriate approaches, and to evaluate and develop approaches. This chapter provides an overview of the evidence of how these approaches have been developed.

Summary

- **Schools select interventions based on a wide range of information**, such as local authority support, AA advice and guidance, consideration of data, research on interventions, and input from staff, parents and pupils.

- Local authorities have indicated evidence of a shifting focus and streamlining of approaches towards those approaches where there was **evidence of effectiveness and impact**.

- Analysis of the different years of the ASF indicate **mixed approaches** to closing the attainment gap, with a focus on the most deprived alongside other 'universal approaches'. Most schools have taken a mixed approach, with 85% of all respondents indicating that they have used ASF to support 'universal' approaches.

- **Targeted support for individual pupils** is an emphasis in the approach of nearly all schools (98%) and a 'high emphasis' in 3 out of 4 schools. The next most common themes in approaches were **teachers skills or practice** (92% of schools), **resources or tools for teaching** (89%), **self-improvement/improvement planning** (88%), **dedicated staff time** (86%) and **data skills or use** (85%).

- Local authorities are supporting **effective self-evaluation** that is leading to improved tracking and evaluation of impact, and refinement of approaches.

4.1 Approaches to selecting interventions

Schools select interventions based on a wide range of factors, such as local authority support, AA advice and guidance, consideration of data, research on interventions, and input from staff, parents and pupils.

There are many factors that influence how schools select appropriate approaches, as these are often tailored to each school's needs. Schools and headteachers have support from local authorities to discuss which approaches work best, and the great majority of headteachers feel confident in choosing ones that would help close the attainment gap.

In the 2020 Headteacher survey, factors associated with the development of approaches included:

- Collaborative working;
- Evidence of approaches becoming more embedded;
- Improvements in use of guidance and planning;
- Increased focus on the use of data, including greater rigour in use of data, greater access to data and greater data literacy;
- Staffing increases;
- Increasing opportunities for professional learning;
- Easily accessible support and clear communication channels;
- Improved understanding of the poverty-related attainment gap and of the experience of poverty and its impact on children and families;
- Continued development of mechanisms to support strategic planning and governance;
- Aspirational target setting; and
- Increasingly adaptive and responsive approaches.

In the first two years of the ASF, there were wide-ranging and varied approaches to choosing interventions across authorities. Some schools were given autonomy and flexibility by their local authorities to select a given intervention, while other schools were provided with a suite of potential interventions to choose from. Factors that played a role were data and evidence, support from AAs and input from parents/carers and pupils.

Qualitative research asked teachers and local authorities to describe their approach to selecting interventions. It revealed that data and evidence played a key part in the process of selecting interventions and that local authorities largely took the lead in this process.

AAs have played a key role in supporting the development of approaches. Most AAs interviewed in the qualitative research indicated that they supported schools and teachers, particularly in primary schools, to identify and monitor interventions.

Our collaborative work with our AA has been a significant factor in improvements over the last 12 months. [Their] work with schools to help teams understand the importance of data; to support schools to see the links between raising attainment and an appropriate and relevant curriculum; [their] support to the project lead in developing a more coherent attainment challenge plan all contributed to a productive and successful year. [Challenge Authority Progress Report]

At a local authority level, interventions were chosen to reflect a number of broad priorities, based on, for example, attainment gap data, previously successful approaches and engagement with headteachers and other partners or services.

In the ASF qualitative research case studies undertaken in Year 3 of the ASF, local authority officers indicated that they set broad priorities for selecting approaches through:

- reviewing data to identify attainment gaps;
- engaging headteachers to explore views;
- building on previous successful approaches and experience of programmes;
- gathering evidence and research about successful approaches; and
- building on good relationships with other partners and services.

In some cases, local authority officers encouraged headteachers to select their own interventions, and research approaches themselves (with support). These local authority areas felt that it was important that teachers took ownership of the approaches, and drove the approach. In others, schools were offered access to interventions which were set at a local authority wide level. This was to ensure that the approach was joined up and clearly managed and governed. Some areas also indicated that teachers did not always have time to review research and evidence.

Case study findings from the 2018 Headteacher survey highlighted the value of a coordinated approach to ASF interventions, and the substantial planning time required. This was reflected in several schools using ASF to fund staff whose roles are dedicated to coordinate supported interventions. Some schools (typically primary schools and smaller secondary schools) had used the ASF to introduce a single role to coordinate activities, while others had introduced dedicated leads for specific areas. These schools identified benefits in dedicated staff members having the time required to support delivery, to ensure a more coherent approach across the school, and to support development of whole-school approaches.

Participation of Children and Young People in deciding approaches

Evidence from qualitative case studies show that input from teaching staff, parents/carers and children was identified as an important element in ensuring interventions were based on an accurate understanding of children's needs and the local community. Schools also noted that pupils and parents often identified a different set of priorities to those identified by staff, demonstrating the value of ensuring a broad range of perspectives. Examples of pupil and parent input included consultation exercises to develop priorities, use of participatory budgeting with pupils, and ongoing engagement through pupil representative groups.

Almost a third of AA professional reports collated in late 2020 noted particular initiatives targeted specifically at promoting participation of children and young people affected by poverty. This included developing programmes to raise the understanding of the impact of poverty with children and young people.

A few reports described how learners are being consulted about ways to respond to emerging needs in the context of the pandemic and some described participation in programmes relating to children's rights including the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme.

In one authority, funding from the Attainment Scotland Fund is supporting and increasing opportunities for young people to take leadership roles, for example, the Pupil Led Enquiry programme. The Senior Leadership Team has identified the need to ensure that pupil voice is further developed in order for it to make an impact on the delivery of learning and teaching. The authority should continue with its plans to build on innovative programmes which are increasing pupil voice and aspiration and integrate the learning and approaches more fully into the curriculum. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

One local authority implemented the Social Justice Ambassadors Programme which uses the voice of young people to tackle current social issues, many of which are related to poverty. It is an educational programme which supports young people to become social researchers exploring these issues and how they impact on their own community and the world around them. The approach was successfully piloted and culminated in an event where young people presented 19 motions regarding community issues to lead staff from across the LA including Elected Members, third sector and Community Partnerships. They worked together to explore the young people's findings through an interactive café conversation. The current research focus is centred on the impact of COVID-19, poverty and recovery. Collaborations with school staff and young people are being used to explore PEF spend and in one high school, they are discussing using the Young Scot card as a means to allow young people to purchase resources they require.

4.2 Targeting of approaches

Most schools have implemented both targeted and universal interventions, with 85% of all respondents indicating that they have used ASF to support 'universal' approaches.

Analysis of the different years of the ASF indicate mixed approaches to closing the attainment gap, with a focus on the most deprived alongside other 'universal approaches'. Survey responses from the 2020 Headteacher Survey indicated that a large majority of schools have included a focus on the pupils or parents experiencing deprivation or disadvantage as part of their approach to achieving equity; 83% include a focus on those experiencing socio-economic deprivation and 77% include a focus on other types of disadvantage. However, most schools have taken a mixed approach, with 85% of all respondents indicating that they have used ASF to support 'universal' approaches. These findings are consistent across most key respondent

groups, although schools in rural areas are less likely to include a specific focus on those affected by disadvantage.

Over half (58%) of respondents in the 2018 survey reported targeting at least some of their interventions in ‘other’ ways. A total of 153 respondents provided a description of these other ways. This included using attainment, attendance, exclusion or risk of exclusion data. Headteachers also looked to individual characteristics when targeting their interventions, including: additional support needs; care experienced; adverse childhood experiences and having English as an additional language.

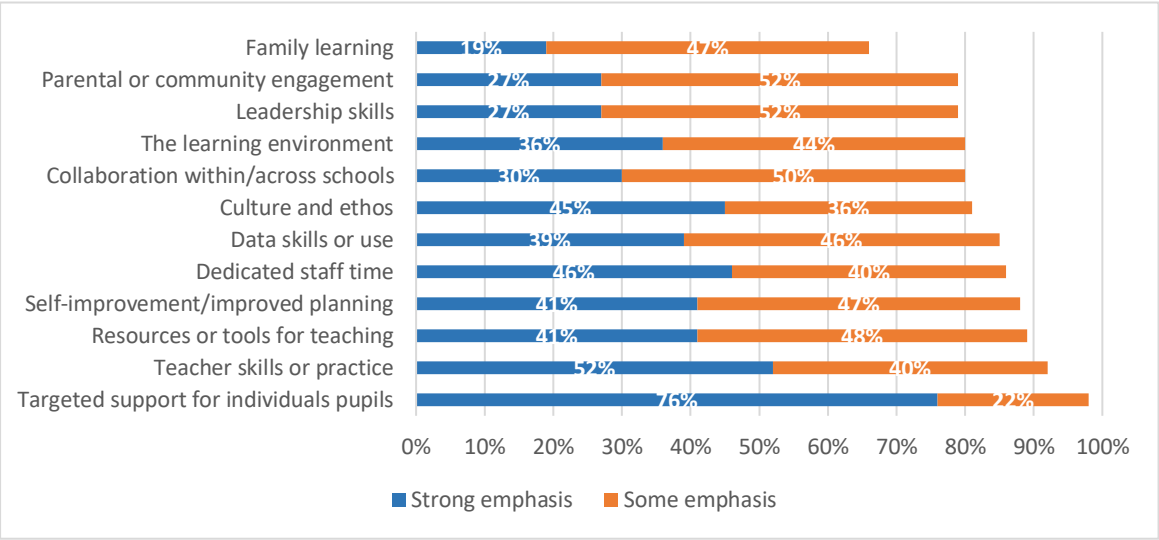
In addition, the profile of the school influenced the nature of targeted approaches. For example, schools with a large proportion of their school roll from the most deprived areas needed to take into consideration other criteria in order to prioritise resources. For schools with a small proportion of their school roll registered for free school meals, consideration of a wider range of needs helped ensure an inclusive approach.

4.3 Focus of approaches

Most school approaches had a broad focus – referring to multiple themes such as targeted support for individual pupils, improving teachers skills or practice, improving data skills.

As well as addressing key areas for children and young people – such as literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing – school approaches also sought to develop wider school improvement themes, such as teaching skills and use of data and evidence. Responses from the 2020 Headteacher Survey indicated that the approaches selected by schools generally had a relatively broad focus in this respect, with the great majority referring to multiple themes. The responses to the 2020 survey are shown in Figure 6.1. Targeted support for individual pupils is an emphasis in the approach of nearly all schools (98%) and a ‘high emphasis’ in 3 out of 4 schools. The next most common themes in approaches were teachers skills or practice (92% of schools), resources or tools for teaching (89%), self-improvement / improvement planning (88%), dedicated staff time (86%) and data skills or use (85%). The responses show that approaches included a broad range of themes.

Figure 4.1: Proportion of schools that reported they had a focus on the following themes



4.4 Changes in approach over time

Local authorities have indicated evidence of a shifting focus and streamlining of approaches towards those approaches where there was evidence of effectiveness and impact.

The ASF evaluation considered the extent to which plans changed over time. Headteachers responding to the online survey were asked to indicate to what extent their interventions (supported by any of the funding streams) were new, a scale up from previous year or continuing at the same level. Across both Year 2 and 3, respondents most commonly indicated that the interventions were newly introduced.

In Year 3 of the Headteacher Survey, there was an increase in those reporting that most interventions were newly introduced and a reduction in those reporting that most interventions were a scale up of an intervention implemented in previous year. This reflects the inclusion of PEF-only schools; 61% reported that most interventions were newly introduced compared to 30% of Schools Programme schools and 47% of Challenge Authority schools.

Further evidence on the development of local authority approaches is provided through the Local Authority Survey 2019. Local authorities provided their views on the extent to which the approach for addressing the poverty-related attainment gap had changed within their local authority over the period of funding. Of 27 local authority responses to this question, 20 viewed their approach as having changed either significantly or to some extent. A further seven viewed their approach as having changed to a limited extent. Specifically, with regard to the nine Challenge Authorities, two indicated their approach had changed significantly, three indicated the approach had changed to some extent, and four indicated limited change.

Local Authority Survey responses indicated evidence of a shifting focus and streamlining of approaches towards those approaches where there was evidence of effectiveness and impact. Challenge Authority progress reports similarly suggested evidence of change and continuity in approaches, highlighting the maturation of existing approaches in some instances and innovation in others. Innovation included pilot approaches/interventions in development as well as new approaches being rolled out on the basis of positive pilot evaluation. Challenge Authority progress reports clearly linked refinement of approaches to assessments of effectiveness. Where authorities indicated limited or no change in approach, this was primarily due to continuation of an existing approach.

Approaches to closing the poverty-related attainment gap are being refined based on improvement and use of evidence. Enhancements or adaptations in approaches to literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing introduced to close the poverty-related attainment gap were based on the increasing use of a broad range of data, a focus on measuring impact, and a focus on building sustainability.

Enhancements or adaptations in approaches were based on the increasing use of a broad range of data, a focus on measuring impact, and a focus on building sustainability. This is illustrated in the following comment:

'… a shift in focus from use of a wide range of interventions to narrowing the range of approaches ..[..]..informed by our experience and evidence gathering over the past three years' (Schools Programme local authority)

4.5 Evaluation of approaches

Local authorities are supporting effective self-evaluation that is leading to improved tracking and evaluation of impact, and refinement of approaches.

The majority of the nine challenge authorities were assessed through inspections as having robust and highly-effective self-evaluation processes in place. Where practice is strongest, self-evaluation is securing significant improvement at all levels in the system. There are clear links between the strategic vision for improved outcomes and the day-to-day practice of staff. In a minority of challenge authorities, whilst self-evaluation has improved, it is not yet leading to improved outcomes for learners. More time and a greater depth of consistency is needed to embed their approaches. All challenge authorities use a range of approaches to ensure stakeholders are actively consulted through self-evaluation.

Case study feedback indicates that ASF support has helped to improve capacity for tracking and evaluation of impact, with schools gathering a substantial volume of evidence around intervention. Some schools noted that their local authority had made a positive contribution to their efforts to evaluate ASF activity.

Most schools reported adapting their interventions in response to emerging monitoring data. Schools also reported feeling more confident about trialling new

approaches on the basis that findings from their ongoing evaluation activities could be used to refine the approach over time.

A Challenge Authority's inspection found that self-evaluation permeates every aspect of education at authority, school and individual practitioner level. There is a clear, shared expectation that everyone involved will evaluate their practice and continuously improve it. This involves regularly gathering and analysing the views of learners, parents and other stakeholders who are involved in education. The authority's extremely effective approach to self-evaluation informs policy and practice and is focused on ensuring that learning activities are appropriate. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

5. Progress across short- and medium-term outcomes

In order to meet the strategic aim of closing the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities, a series of short- and medium-term outcomes have been identified that will lead to progress towards meeting the strategic aim.

This chapter analyses evidence towards the following short and medium term outcomes:

- Awareness of range of approaches to achieve equity within their particular context and setting (5.1)
- A culture and ethos that promotes high aspirations for all and improves equity is embedded across the whole school community (5.2)
- Increased engagement in professional learning with a focus on reducing poverty related attainment gap (5.3)
- Increased focus on Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy to improve outcomes for children and young people living in poverty (5.4)
- A focus on increasing the engagement of parents, carers and families living in areas of deprivation with their child's and their own learning (5.5)
- Increased evidence of collaboration across the education system (5.6)
- Increased use of research evidence and data (5.7)

Summary

- The ASF Headteacher Survey indicated that a great majority of headteachers (96%) felt that they had a **good awareness of the range of approaches** that can help close the poverty-related attainment gap, while 93% felt confident about **selecting the approach most effective for their school.**

- 45% of headteachers indicated that there was a strong emphasis on **culture and ethos** in their approach to closing the attainment gap.

- A large majority of headteachers indicated that the approach to achieving equity in education is **embedded within their school community** in 2020; 84% agreed that this was the case to a 'great' or 'moderate' extent, while no headteachers said 'not at all'

- A strong focus across schools and local authorities has been placed on **professional learning** to bring about high quality teaching and learning.

- Nearly 2 in 3 headteachers have seen an increase in **collaborative working** in their school as a result of ASF support, including one quarter who have seen a large increase.

- 84% of headteachers felt that they are 'very good' or 'good' in using **data and evidence** to inform development of their approach

5.1 Awareness of range of approaches to achieve equity

96% of headteachers felt that they had a good awareness of the range of approaches that can help close the poverty-related attainment gap, while 93% felt confident about selecting the approach most effective for their school.

The ASF Headteacher Survey has been undertaken on five consecutive years to gather the views and experiences of headteachers and schools on the implementation and impact of the ASF. Findings illustrate a growing confidence in the successful implementation of approaches:

- A great majority of headteachers (98%) felt they **understood the challenges and barriers faced by pupils affected by poverty** in the 2020 survey; including 78% who felt they understood this 'to a great extent'. This finding was consistent across most respondent groups, although those in rural areas were less likely to feel that they understood these challenges.

- A great majority of headteachers (96%) felt they had a **good awareness of the range of approaches** that can help to close the poverty-related attainment gap in 2019; including 60% who felt they were 'very aware' of the range of approaches. Survey findings indicated variation in views across urban and rural areas, with headteachers of schools in rural areas less likely to feel that they were aware of the range of potential approaches.

- A great majority of headteachers (93%) felt confident in selecting approaches to close the poverty-related attainment gap that would be **most effective in their school** in 2019; with around half of these feeling confident 'to a great extent'.

- A large majority of headteachers indicated that the approach to achieving equity in education is **embedded within their school community** in 2020; 84% agreed that this was the case to a ‘great’ or ‘moderate’ extent, while no headteachers said ‘not at all’.

There was some variation in views across key respondent groups. In particular, headteachers of schools who only receive the PEF element of ASF and those with lower PEF allocations were less likely to feel that the approach to achieving equity is embedded.

“As secondary headteachers, we are actively encouraged and involved in strategic decision making. Our opinions are listened to. We are constantly reminded our role is to improve outcomes for young people and families, raise attainment and be mindful that we are striving to close the poverty attainment gap. This is then emphasised to all staff at every opportunity along with the inclusion agenda.” Secondary headteacher, Challenge Authority

5.2 A culture and ethos that promotes high aspirations for all and improves equity is embedded across the whole school community

45% of headteachers indicated that there was a strong emphasis on culture and ethos in their approach to closing the attainment gap

The 2019 ASF Headteacher Survey found that 45% of headteachers indicated that there was a strong emphasis on culture and ethos in their approach to closing the attainment gap, and a further 36% said they placed some emphasis on culture and ethos. Analysis of the survey indicates that the headteachers most likely to have reported seeing progress in closing the gap were those who had seen a change in culture or ethos (more collaborative working and/or embedding the approach to equity) or have improved their understanding of barriers faced by pupils and families.

84% of headteachers in the survey indicated that the approach to achieving equity in education is embedded within their school community, while 2% disagreed.

ASF Evaluation qualitative case study feedback suggested that some schools had seen a wider change of culture or ethos as a result of ASF support. This included schools where targeted interventions had required a change of approach and development of data skills for staff, a more nuanced understanding of what 'equity' means for teaching practice, and a more inclusive ethos (for example a stronger role for pupils and families in planning and delivery of approaches). Culture change was also evident in some schools' use of the ASF as an opportunity to develop whole-school approaches, for example embedding nurture across the curriculum and whole-school approaches to numeracy and literacy.

The Education Scotland Inspection of Challenge Authorities summary report published in 2019 found that Challenge Authorities with a shared and embedded vision and values, leading to a culture of relentless drive for improvement, were among those making the greatest progress in closing the attainment gap.

5.3 Increased engagement in professional learning with a focus on reducing the poverty-related attainment gap

A strong focus across schools and local authorities has been placed on professional learning to bring about high quality teaching and learning

Across the Challenge Authorities, well-considered, strategically planned professional learning, informed by high-quality data, has been a very significant factor in bringing about improved outcomes. In the majority of Challenge Authorities, key partnerships with attainment advisors, academia, and others, have delivered professional learning at classroom level in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. In addition, they have up-skilled staff on how to make best use of data, improvement methodologies and action research. Challenge Authority inspections found professional learning has enabled practitioners to make informed judgments about appropriate interventions and evaluate their impact.

There are examples of sector-leading professional learning which have universally driven change in classrooms across an authority leading to improved attainment. These approaches have been co-constructed between academia, authorities and establishments. The learning has been shared and built upon, reducing duplication and increasing the pace of improvement. As a result, there is greater collaboration within and between establishments by confident, well-informed staff.

One authority's officers have worked with a private education company to develop training to improve learning and teaching. This has been organised in such a way as to ensure that the training programme is sustainable. To date, the programme has involved over 3,000 participants. Almost all staff in focus groups held the view that the professional learning they were undertaking was the best and most impactful of their career. Staff demonstrated clarity of thought and depth of understanding about their own learning and education research. This was clearly impacting on, and improving, learning and teaching in classrooms across the local authority. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

To enhance a culture of collaborative professional learning, all Challenge Authorities have put in place professional learning for leadership at all levels. In the best examples, this is providing sustainability through universal opportunities and succession planning. This also applies to young people who are offered high-quality opportunities to lead and motivate others within their schools and across the Challenge Authority.

A local authority has appointed Development Officers in assessment and moderation, literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, and curricular transitions. This team works extremely effectively to offer high-quality career long professional learning to staff on an individual, establishment and authority-wide basis. This is an innovative use of Attainment Scotland funding which has improved pedagogy across the authority as well as the consistency of assessment and moderation. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

5.4 Increased focus on health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy to improve outcomes for children and young people living in poverty

During the first two years of the ASF, literacy and health and wellbeing interventions were prioritised, while progress around numeracy was less evident. There was considerable progress made in the primary programme, with strong foundations being built around leadership, resources and training of the workforce. Reflecting the later expansion of the ASF into secondary schools, evidence of progress in the secondary programme was more limited.

Year 3 of the ASF Evaluation found that interventions were implemented around literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The 2018 Headteacher Survey found that, unlike in years 1 and 2 of the ASF, numeracy interventions (mentioned by 88% of respondents) appear to be as prominent as literacy (95%) and health and wellbeing interventions (90%). Interventions on literacy and numeracy were prominent in the primary programme, while there was some evidence that secondary school interventions tended to focus more health and wellbeing. From the Challenge Authority progress reports, there was some evidence that progress was still balanced in favour of the primary schools.

In Year 4 of the ASF, evidence sources pointed to a wide variety of approaches implemented around literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. Strategic approaches had been developed by Challenge Authorities tailored to fit local needs and circumstances. There was evidence of an increased focus on the development of local authority-wide approaches, such as whole school nurture approaches related to health and wellbeing. Other authority-wide approaches were also evident, such as the Cost of the School Day project which has developed in several Challenge Authorities.

Local Authority Survey responses indicated evidence of a shifting focus and streamlining of approaches towards those approaches where there was evidence of effectiveness and impact. Challenge Authority progress reports similarly suggested evidence of change and continuity in approaches, highlighting the maturation of existing approaches in some instances and innovation in others.

Literacy

Interventions around literacy appear to be the earliest to have been implemented and to have shown impact, particularly amongst the youngest age groups.

Evidence sources show that literacy interventions were the first to be implemented and to have an impact, particularly in the initial stages when the programme was focused on primary schools. In qualitative research exploring the roll out of the ASF, most teachers were very positive about the focus on literacy, believing that the ASF had helped the school to embed consistent approaches to literacy, and spend more time on literacy within the curriculum.

Teachers commenting on outcomes in qualitative interviews reported that they had seen an improvement in literacy attainment through evidence from standardised

assessments and reading scores, as well as observations of increasing Literacy skills.

In one school, baseline testing for P3, P4 and P5 showed an improvement of 25% in literacy. The school had delivered interventions to target groups and had 'control groups' in order to better measure the impact of the intervention. It also benchmarked itself against other schools.

One school has used the 'Read to Self' approach with P5 pupils. They began to see tremendous increases in reading age over a very short space of time. It was rolled out to the whole school, and as the approach has become more established, some pupils have made 36 months progress over 12 months.

Most of the early evidence around impact related to younger age groups. Some teachers said that they had seen an increase in phonological and phonemic awareness for pupils in P1, and evidence of this improvement as P1 classes moved up the school. A few also highlighted progress in other year groups, in relation to reading and writing levels.

In one Challenge Authority inspection, it was assessed that there is a range of emerging evidence that improvements in learning and teaching in literacy are leading to increased progress for children at the early level. For example, the nursery narrative initiative is showing evidence of eight months gain following an average of ten weeks intensive experience for children. Similarly, there is evidence of positive impact on improving progress of children in SIMD 1 and 2.

Numeracy

9 out of 10 schools reported numeracy interventions as part of their school's approach to closing the attainment gap.

Numeracy interventions weren't as common as those in literacy and health and wellbeing in the first two years of the ASF, with some local authorities and schools saying that numeracy interventions had generally started later. By Year 3, however, almost 9 out of 10 headteachers described numeracy interventions as part of their school's approach to closing the attainment gap.

In one local authority, 64 teachers have completed a Mathematical Growth Mindset course. One study with a P2 class showed the shift in mindset was significant

- 83% of children believed that even if they worked hard they would never become very good at any subject. This dropped to 0% at the end of the project.
- 94% of children initially believed that making mistakes in maths meant they weren't good at it. Only 6% still believed this after the project.
- Before learning about growth mindset, 100% of the class thought speed was very important when answering maths questions. Just 12% agreed with this by the end.

- Teacher observations also noted positive changes in confidence, attitude and resilience towards maths.

A survey of participating teachers found a growth mindset culture was developing, with a positive shift in attitudes towards children who were not attaining. The vast majority noted an improvement or significant improvement in the children's understanding of; speed related learning, seeing mistakes as learning opportunities, importance of effort and persistence; and an understanding of learning anxiety. [Challenge Authority Progress Report]

Schools reported using a range of sources to both target their interventions and to measure their effectiveness:

One secondary school has seen an improvement in reading age and confidence, in a short space of time. It has also seen a big increase in young people reaching appropriate numeracy levels at S3 and S4, and teachers can see that young people are now more able to answer more challenging maths questions. Teachers are also more aware of the types of questions that pupils struggle with, and there is a numeracy team to provide lesson starter resources to review these questions. Attainment data shows that the approaches are making a difference.

Health and Wellbeing

Teachers taking part in qualitative research felt that good health and wellbeing was critical in providing the foundation for learning and improved attainment.

Many teachers taking part in qualitative research felt that good health and wellbeing was critical in that that it provided the foundation for learning and improved attainment. This included addressing social and emotional needs, to ensure that children were able to attend school, enjoy school and be ready to learn.

Teachers indicated that progress on health and wellbeing could be challenging to track, but some were seeing positive indications. Signs of progress included:

- fewer exclusions from school;
- better punctuality;
- improvements in behaviour at school – for example through decreased referrals from class teachers around behaviour issues;
- healthy family eating;
- increased pupil motivation and engagement;
- increased resilience among pupils;
- improvements in relation to SHANARRI indicators.

ASF Evaluation qualitative case study evidence suggests that schools typically observed improvements around emotional wellbeing and pupil engagement more quickly than, for example, attainment. In addition to quantitative measures of pupil

attendance, these included more qualitative changes such as improved pupil confidence and engagement, which schools noted can be more difficult to measure.

Perceived improvements in emotional wellbeing and engagement were also consistent with a focus on these as underlying issues affecting attainment. For example, several schools noted that work to embed nurture approaches across the curriculum had been informed by a perceived need to improve emotional wellbeing and develop a more positive school ethos. Case studies suggested that schools' experience of implementing these approaches has reinforced the importance of these factors for improved attainment.

In the majority of local authorities, ASF funding had been used to support targeted health and wellbeing interventions, training and resources to address the needs of learners and their families. Almost all local authorities were able to evidence improvements in children and young people's health and wellbeing resulting from PEF interventions. Positive impacts were also noted as a consequence of the investment in professional learning through the SAC. In most local authorities, there was evidence of various improvements including improvements to the culture within settings, increased practitioner knowledge and skills, increased staff confidence to identify and effectively address learners' needs and improvements in the capacity of teams to sustain interventions.

A local authority reports a partnership approach with Barnado's which has achieved positive emotional and mental health outcomes for parents, children and young people. 211 children and young people have or are presently participating in 1 to 1 interventions with Family Support Workers who address mental health and wellbeing. 93% of families engaging or who have engaged in a bespoke package of support this year are showing improved mental health and well-being. 95% of families across the year have benefited from brief financial interventions such as vouchers for family activities, cinema, food share, food bank, funding grants, clothing vouchers etc. [Challenge Authority Progress Report]

Factors reported to have been integral to the delivery and success of health and wellbeing approaches have included: strong strategic emphasis on nurture; effective programmes and training; accreditation opportunities; provision of specific staff successful collaboration with a range of partners including key stakeholders such as parents and learners.

5.5 A focus on increasing the engagement of parents, carers and families living in areas of deprivation with their child's and their own learning

90% of headteachers reported an increase in collaborative working with families and communities as a result of the work on closing the attainment gap.

A focus on parental and family engagement has formed a key part of the approach developed in many schools. This has included, for example, approaches aimed at supporting pupil attendance and engagement, and improving children and young people's aspirations. Headteacher Survey 2019 findings suggest the need for a clear commitment to parental engagement, and recognition of the time required to build relationships with families.

There were a number of specific approaches to achieving and maintaining parental engagement highlighted in headteacher comments, including use of extra-curricular and physical/sports activities, and ensuring free access to activities. The importance of enabling parents to engage with schools in ways parents felt comfortable with was also highlighted. However, there was also the perception raised by some headteachers of the need for greater clarity in terms of how parents can positively support learning without it being overly burdensome.

In the 2019 headteacher survey, 27% of respondents indicated that there was a strong emphasis on parental or community engagement in their approach, and a further 52% stated that there was some focus in their approach. A great majority (90%) of headteachers in the 2020 survey reported an increase in collaborative working with families and communities as a result of the work on closing the attainment gap.

Staff are using a very wide range of universal and targeted family learning opportunities to successfully support the most vulnerable learners. For example, Families First holiday clubs provided lunch and engaging activities to over 200 children and their extended families daily. Targeted Family Learning programmes in partnership with community learning and development, including Pizza Reading and Pizza Maths, have supported the families in greatest need to engage much more effectively with school. Over 300 parent/carers have engaged with Pizza Family Learning and report that they feel much more confident in school and are better able to support their children in reading and numeracy. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

Family workers, funded through ASF and/or PEF, have been key in developing increased engagement of parents and carers with children and young people's learning in over half of the local authorities, with a focus of supporting those in most need. They effectively support families with a range of issues and seek to mitigate the impact of poverty on family life and learning. Collaborative working, including that of the Family Link workers, has led to improved outcomes for children, young people and their families by addressing very practical poverty-related barriers. There is evidence across the majority of local authorities of holiday activity and food programmes, with local authorities seeing improved access to food, clothing and benefits as a result of collaborative policies and plans. As a result of family learning

programmes, some findings identified strengthened relationships between schools and families.

A local authority reports positive outcomes for a project that provides support in linking home and school, which has provided sustainable solutions for young people who are poor attenders or dealing with mental health issues affecting school participation. Feedback from schools:

"Link between home and school, regular updates and communications are fantastic, positive outcomes for young people, positive relationships built between all."

"Dedicated workers who liaise with families and engage with pupils in a way no other service can, they supplement the role of Social Work in most cases and have a very good working relationship with the school. They offer support and advice and updates to the pupil, families and school." [Challenge Authority Progress Report]

Working alongside parents and helping to build their confidence and capacity is an important element for family learning. Evidence collecting by Attainment Advisors in 2020 suggests that in at least a quarter of local authorities, there was evidence showing an emphasis on increasing provision of opportunities for parents. These include opportunities to gain valuable skills and qualifications, which have led to employment, further study and/or volunteering opportunities. An increasing number of these are able to report increases in parental employment, sometimes for the first time and a focus on improving parents' communication and literacy skills.

There is a wide range of very well-planned and targeted interventions to engage parents and then to develop how families learn and become active members of the community. Many of the interventions result in accreditation for parents and an increasing number are leading to employment, sometimes for the first time. This is building confidence in individuals and supporting families to have a better future…there is strong evidence that parents are becoming increasingly engaged in supporting their children's learning, in learning themselves and in becoming more active in the community. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

Community learning and development-led learning sessions are delivered to families in primary schools and direct support is currently being provided for over 150 young people in secondary schools. A range of courses, including those focused on personal development have supported a number of parents to successfully move onto college, university and employment. Parents and carers who met with the inspection team spoke very passionately about the impact of the learning opportunities, on their lives and those of their children, with a few describing the powerful life changing impact of the experiences on themselves and their families. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

A question was included in the Local Authority Survey in 2020 in order to capture local authority perspectives of the development of approaches to engaging families and communities. Three respondents indicated their local authority approach to

engaging families and communities had developed significantly over the previous year, with nine indicating the development of approach to engaging families and communities to some extent. Two further respondents perceived only limited development of their local authority's approach to engaging families and communities over the previous year.

As detailed in the 2019 Education Scotland summary inspection report of Challenge Authorities, work with families and communities has been strong across the nine Challenge Authorities. There were positive examples of families reporting greater confidence in supporting their children in reading and numeracy at home. In a majority of Challenge Authorities, there were also examples of structured family learning programmes, which made use of effective partnerships and lead to accredited and meaningful outcomes for parents. There was still scope to bring about greater coherence between work with families and communities and wider attainment challenge activity to support deeper self-evaluation and a clearer understanding of the impact of work with families on the attainment and achievement of children and young people.

In a Challenge Authority, community learning and development was a highly-effective partner for schools, working to improve the life chances of children and young people and their families. Community learning and development-led learning sessions were delivered to families in primary schools and direct support was provided for over 150 young people in secondary schools at the time the Education Scotland inspection report was written in 2019. A range of courses, including those focused on personal development, had supported a number of parents to successfully move onto college, university and employment. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

5.6 Care Experienced Children and Young People

The Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding (CECYP) was introduced in 2018/19 with funding allocated to all local authorities based on the number of looked after children they have in their care or schools aged between 5-15, but with the funding available to be invested to support all care experienced children and young people aged between 0-26.

Data from the 2019 Local Authority survey shows that twenty of twenty-four local authority respondents were of the view that the CECYP Fund supported strategic decision-making to improve attainment or outcomes for care experienced children and young people either to a great extent (9) or to some extent (11). A further four viewed the CECYP Fund to have supported strategic decision-making to a limited extent.

There was recognition in 2019 that it will take time to consult, plan, develop understanding and buy-in, and therefore it is too early to give more than initial indications of progress towards planning and implementation of the CECYP Fund. However, respondents' viewpoints were broadly positive and reflected, for example, the increased focus on care experienced children and young people and links to existing local authority priorities (e.g. Children's Services Plans).

There was also evidence of progress in terms of developing structures, processes and approaches. Models (eg Virtual Headteacher) and initiatives (eg MCR Pathways) were highlighted, as well as appointment of specific posts, such as CECYP support workers. There was also emerging evidence of decision-making informed by analysis of research and data, and of collaboration and sharing of good practice (eg CELCIS). As one local authority response described, the CECYP Fund represented '…[a] creative new approach to supporting Care Experienced Young People' at the local authority level.

According to data from the 2020 Local Authority survey, the CECYP Fund was viewed positively as having supported strategic decision-making for outcomes for care experienced children and young people with all local authority respondents indicating this (six to a great extent, nine to some extent).

5.7 Increased evidence of collaboration across the education system

Nearly 2 in 3 headteachers reported seeing an increase in collaborative working in their school as a result of ASF support in 2020, including one quarter who have seen a large increase.

'Collaboration within and across all sectors has increased extensively enabling a relentless focus on enhancing teaching and learning, while sharing and planning experiences across the [broad general education] BGE and beyond. This has been both as a direct result of planned programmes and often as an unforeseen gain.' (Challenge Authority respondent – ASF Year 5 Report)

Collaboration and partnership working have been hallmarks of the ASF since its inception. In the 2020 Headteacher Survey, the majority of headteachers had seen an increase in collaborative working in their school up to March 2020 as a result of ASF support:

- Nearly 2 in 3 (65%) indicated that they had seen an increase in collaborative working, including more than a third (36%) who had seen a large increase in collaborative working as a result of the fund.

- A substantial proportion of headteachers indicated that they had seen a further increase in collaborative working during school building closures between March and June 2020; 46% indicated this. Although this is fewer than had seen an increase in collaboration up to March 2020, it should be noted that school building closures covered a shorter time period.

Evidence from the 2019 Education Scotland summary inspection report of Challenge Authorities suggest that the most successful authorities had put in place very effective partnership working, enhancing the capacity of education staff to meet the needs of learners by improving learning and teaching. In particular, strong partnerships with universities were helping to improve pedagogy as well as the use and analysis of data to measure the impact of initiatives and interventions. Working in partnership around family engagement initiatives was leading to improvements in parenting skills, parental ambition and employability.

One authority continues to build upon and further strengthen the impact of partnership working to enhance staff capacity in improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Vibrant Communities is an important partner for many schools, working to improve the life chances of children, young people and their families. Other partners, including Centrestage, are making a positive difference to a few targeted young people and their families. Where successful, these are building young people's confidence, improving their sense of belonging and re-engaging them in their learning. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

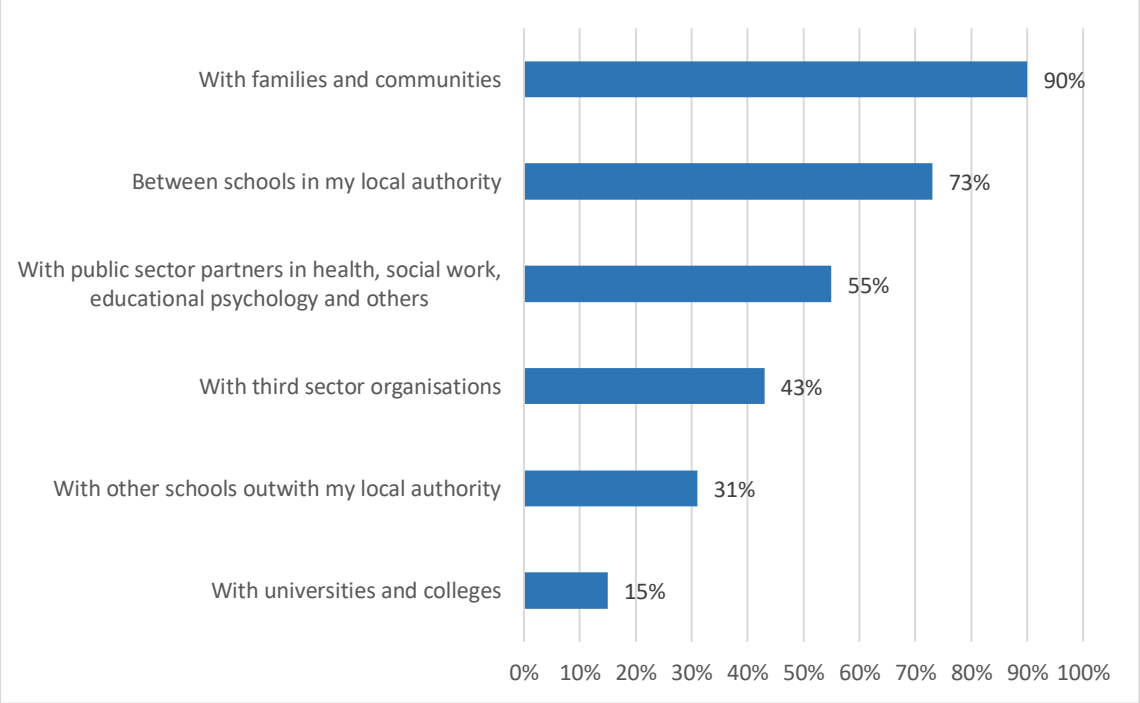
Types of collaboration

Increased collaborative working included collaboration around specific interventions or priorities (such as between teaching and support staff to develop a tailored curriculum for targeted pupils), and wider collaboration as part of a stronger focus on inquiry and improving practice. This collaboration was primarily within schools, but some had also used collaboration and pooling of resources with cluster schools to maximise the value of funding, and felt that in particular the autonomy provided by PEF had enabled this kind of collaboration around shared priorities.

In terms of organisations that schools are collaborating with as part of the ASF, schools were most likely to have seen an increase in collaboration with families and communities (90%), and other schools in their local authority (73%).

Headteachers also reported increased collaborative working with professionals in health, social work, and educational psychology (55%) and third sector organisations (43%) . Headteachers also reported collaborations with schools outwith the local authority (31%) and with universities and colleges (15%).

Figure 5.1: Proportion of headteachers reporting collaboration with the following groups (2020 Headteacher Survey)



The extent of partnerships, particularly with other professionals (e.g. Speech and Language Therapists) and with third sector organisations was evident in Schools Programme progress reports. Partnerships with third sector organisations tended to be related to the contracting and delivery of specific interventions or projects, and were seen across a whole range of areas with many different partner organisations. Partnerships appeared particularly prevalent in relation to health and wellbeing-related activities and interventions.

Third sector organisations are working to engage parents through confidence building programmes, leading to them eventually taking up volunteering opportunities. The approach is designed to raise the expectations of parents who should then be more aspirational for their children. [Challenge Authority Inspection Report]

Collaboration featured strongly as a theme within Challenge Authority progress reports and provided some further detail on mechanisms to facilitate collaboration. For example, there was evidence of established networks within local authorities (such as networks linking headteachers to colleagues working at authority-wide SAC programme level), as well as specific collaborations (such as networks linking those with responsibilities for data and evidence).

Partnerships with universities were commonly reported within Challenge Authority progress reports. A number of Challenge Authorities have entered into collaborations with universities which have led to a number of benefits, such as schools implementing research-based initiatives and local authorities commissioning evaluations of approaches and progress.

An authority has initiated and developed university partnerships, including the University of Strathclyde and University of Stirling. This work is informed by identified areas of need across the council. As a result, university staff are working with several schools to implement research-based initiatives. Initial work on reading has involved helping school staff to understand reading as a social activity. This is beginning to lead to a culture shift in the schools involved. Children report that they are finding reading more enjoyable and have been learning techniques which help them in other curricular areas such as interdisciplinary learning. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

Collaborations beyond the local authority level were also highlighted in progress reports, such as schools collaborating at the Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) level (e.g. good practice sharing at RIC level regarding Family Link Worker interventions).

Impact of collaboration

Stakeholders involved in the ASF qualitative research in 2018 felt that the ASF had a positive impact on collaboration within schools and that increased collaborative working had resulted in:

- increased professional dialogue and thinking together about new approaches
- making teachers more willing to seek out new approaches
- enabled joint planning and a more formal approach to collaboration
- encouraged peer observation, team teaching and collegiate working
- encouraged teachers to undertake joint training and joint learning
- energised teachers and built a culture of sharing

- building the confidence of teachers in relation to peer observation and self-evaluation

Factors promoting and hindering collaboration

Respondents in the Headteacher survey (2017) were asked to comment on why they felt there had been an increase in collaboration as a result of the ASF. Their responses revealed that the following factors helped to foster collaboration:

- A shared motivation or commitment of teachers to achieve the aims of the ASF and work collaboratively to make an impact
- Additional resources made available as a result of the ASF, including additional staff and more time
- Increased enthusiasm, motivation and confidence of staff
- Professional learning opportunities

This was supported by qualitative research which found that training and professional development was a key catalyst for greater collaboration; it provided the opportunity for teachers to share their learning.

Teachers reported through qualitative research that within schools collaboration worked well because teachers were excited and eager to learn. Feeling empowered and confident and having the time to reflect on their practice also supported collaboration.

Strategic stakeholders taking part in the qualitative research felt that national events and the AAs role provided more opportunities for networking between local authorities. Local authorities and schools reported that positive aspects of the AAs role involved their ability to link in with national and local networks, fostering collaboration and information sharing.

In instances where headteachers did not identify improved collaboration as a result of the ASF, this was commonly due to perceptions of an existing well-established culture of collaboration. There was also some evidence of headteachers believing that the ASF had not had sufficient impact on staff time or opportunities within schools for collaborative working.

In some examples, RICs have helped to extend and facilitate collaboration by providing opportunities for staff to collaborate across local authorities. Partnerships with academic institutions have helped to support research and the upskilling of staff. In most local authorities effective collaborations between education staff and others including community learning and development staff, health professionals, businesses and third sector partners were noted. This has led to an improved understanding of barriers facing those living in poverty. Links with employers through Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) have had a positive impact upon children and young people affected by poverty, for example, by increasing work experience opportunities for vulnerable young people.

5.8 Increased use of data and evidence

Local authorities have put in place support for using data/evidence to target and evaluate approaches, while 84% of headteachers felt that they are 'very good' or 'good' in using data and evidence to inform development of their approach.

Evidence from the 2019 Education Scotland summary inspection report of Challenge Authorities indicate that the authorities making the greatest progress with improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap have high levels of expertise in data analysis and use this to drive outcome-focused self-evaluation.

Almost all schools have developed approaches and procedures for tracking and monitoring children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This has been increasingly supported by local authority tracking systems. In most schools, regular meetings between staff with senior leaders to discuss children's and young people's progress are a key feature of effective practice. This works well when all staff are involved in collaborative discussions.

Staff in almost all schools continue to increase their confidence in the use and analysis of data to plan improvements. The use of the Insight senior phase benchmarking tool in secondary schools allows staff to identify the attainment of different groups of learners, including those residing in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 and 2, those in receipt of FSM, and young people requiring additional support. This is supporting the planning of interventions to close any gaps between groups and raise their attainment.

Schools' use of data

Findings from a range of data sources show that schools are increasingly confident in using data, and are seeing the benefit from doing so. Using evidence has been key in choosing the correct approaches, and schools are now collecting more data than before.

The Headteacher Survey 2020 explored the extent to which headteachers felt confident using data. Findings included:

- A large majority of headteachers felt that they are 'very good' or 'good' in using data and evidence to inform development of their approach; 84% indicated this. This represents a nine-point decrease from 2019, and is similar to the 2017 survey. Although the data do not explain why this measure has decreased, qualitative evidence have suggested that the increasing number of sources of data that are available to schools may be a factor.

- Headteachers were positive about their skills in measuring the impact of their approaches; 82% were positive about their ability to identify appropriate measures, and 76% were positive about their use of evidence to measure impact. However, the latter result represents a 14-point decrease from the 2018 and 2019 surveys (where 90% felt they used evidence to effectively measure impact).

It is also notable that schools who only receive PEF and those with lower PEF allocations were less positive than others on this indicator.

- The majority of headteachers feel that ASF support has helped to develop staff skills and knowledge in using data and evaluation; 63% indicated that ASF had helped to develop these skills to a 'great' or 'moderate' extent. Survey findings indicate some significant variation in views across key respondent groups. In particular, schools who only receive PEF, those in rural areas and those with lower PEF allocations were less positive on this measure.

- Evaluation plans were in place to measure the impact of ASF supported approaches in the great majority of schools, with 95% of Headteacher Survey respondents indicating the presence of a plan. There were a number of reasons for the absence of an evaluation plan provided by the remaining 5%, including referenced changes to schools' approach or indicators requiring the production of a new plan, changes in leadership or staffing constraints delaying production, or difficulty identifying success measures for approaches being implemented.

Local authority approaches

Use of data and evidence relevant to the local context to support decision-making featured strongly for most local authority respondents of the 2020 ASF Local Authority Survey, with ten out of fourteen indicating data and evidence had featured to a great extent in decision-making over the previous year. Two respondents indicated it had featured to some extent, and a further two felt it had featured to some extent.

Progress reports provide evidence of local authority level use of data and evidence within Challenge Authorities. The continued and expanding use of data to support targeting, monitoring and evaluation of work-streams, initiatives and approaches was evident across Challenge Authority progress reports, pointing to the increased focus on data and evaluation to support decision-making and focus on improvement.

A local authority was assessed in an inspection as having an outstanding approach to the use of data to inform improvement in all aspects of its work related to the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The central team of authority officers is strongly focused on improvement and rigorously discusses data regularly with schools, including a focus on the local evidence for impact of Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding. The data analysis team supports this work by providing highly effective professional learning for individual staff, groups, schools and officers. Trained data mentors in each primary school and principal teachers in each secondary school are helping to build staff expertise in data analysis. This is enabling them to identify and implement appropriate, impactful interventions for individual children and young people. [Challenge Authority Inspection]

Evidence from the 2019 Education Scotland summary inspection report of Challenge Authorities shows that, in the majority of Challenge Authorities, continuous progress in closing the gap was underpinned by highly-effective self-evaluation. All Challenge Authorities had improved or were developing further their use of data to raise

attainment. In all nine Challenge Authorities, professional learning in leadership, pedagogy and engaging with research and research methodology was evident.

Types of data used

Increasingly rich data environments were suggested by evidence sources, with a range of mechanisms for using data including combining of data from different sources and different levels within the system. An increasing focus on, and availability of local data was also apparent. Feedback gathered from headteachers as part of the Year 4 survey indicated use of a range of data tools including BGE toolkit and Insight, alongside evidence relating to participation rates, attendance, and progress through specific ASF programmes and interventions.

A wide variety of data sources were cited by Challenge Authorities in their progress reports. These included:

- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL)
- Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA)
- BGE Benchmarking Toolkit
- Insight
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)
- Positive destinations
- Attendance
- Exclusions

Most Challenge Authorities complemented this data with other evidence sources, including: local surveys (including pre- and post-implementation); qualitative focus groups; feedback forms; pupil assessments and attendance tracking.

A local authority described the programme they had built to ensure effective analysis and use of data. Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data is interrogated with all schools who are individually supported and challenged through authority-led attainment visits. A range of data collated through authority learning visits, standards and quality reports, establishment improvement plans, literacy and numeracy baseline assessments (pre and post) and practitioner voice through Collaborative Action Research informs where direct interventions within the authority are made to maximise impact on learning and teaching.

In addition, in April 2018, a mapping study revealed that 6 out of the 9 Challenge Authorities had commissioned an external evaluation to help measure progress and impact of the funding received. These evaluations were undertaken by universities and typically focussed on one of their planned work-streams.

Furthermore, there was some evidence amongst Challenge Authorities of the creation of bespoke tools for direct use by schools. For example, one Challenge Authority had created a monitoring and tracking database for schools to use to track progress on interventions. In another, a specific tool to support schools to measure the impact of interventions was being piloted across the local authority. This raises the potential for authorities to learn from each other about these approaches as they

develop, and to share emerging practice so that these can support other authorities in their own developments.

Benefits of using evidence and data in decision making

According to ASF Evaluation qualitative case study data, local authorities and teachers felt that the use of data had improved considerably through the ASF. It had:

- enabled the development of systems which track each pupil, and allow easy comparison of outcomes within schools, and across some local authorities;
- embedded the use of improvement science methods within some schools;
- built teacher skills around data, evidence, monitoring and evaluation;
- encouraged teachers and schools to take ownership of monitoring and evaluation; and
- enabled teachers to interpret SIMD data, and other data, more carefully and more meaningfully, understanding changes over time.

Factors supporting increasing data literacy and use

Most local authorities have invested in professional learning activities to develop data literacy in education staff, particularly school leaders. This has included training in the use of specific tools such as SNSA, BGE Toolkit and Insight, as well as coaching sessions focused on data.

AAs have been influential in supporting the development of data literacy by working directly with headteachers and/or providing professional development sessions with a focus on helping them to identify poverty-related attainment gaps. Almost all AA reports highlighted this as an aspect of their work with headteachers. CYPIC advisers have also provided important support in this area.

Other local authority staff have been identified as having a specific role in improving the use of data. These included data analysts, data coaches and data champions. Most local authorities have created data tools and/or packs to support effective data use at school level including data packs which are provided by local authorities to support schools as well as online analytical tools which could be used at school level.

6. Progress towards achieving long-term outcomes

There are four long term outcomes that the Challenge aims to achieve in order to progress towards the strategic aim of closing the poverty-related attainment gap. These are:

- Embedded and sustained practices related to addressing the impact of poverty related attainment.
- All children and young people are achieving the expected or excellent educational outcome, regardless of their background.
- An education system which is aspirational, inclusive in ethos, practice and approaches for all including teachers, parents and carers, children and young people.
- Closing of the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.

This chapter uses a range of evidence – headteacher views, attainment data and wider data – to assess progress towards these long-term outcomes**.**

Summary

Perceptions of progress

Headteachers are very positive about the impact of SAC in their school and optimistic about improvements being embedded and continuing over the next five years.

- 9 in 10 schools report seeing an improvement in closing the poverty-related gap in attainment and/or health and wellbeing, while a similar proportion of schools (88%) expect to see an improvement in the next five years.

- A great majority (84%) of headteachers indicated that the approach to achieving equity is embedded within the school community to either a great extent (35%) or a moderate extent (49%).

- Ability to implement approaches relevant to the school, teaching and staffing resources, and high quality learning and teaching, were perceived to be the most important factors in supporting closing the attainment gap.

Progress in improving attainment

Progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap has been made on a number of measures, although the level of such progress is varied depending on the measure under consideration. For the majority of measures, attainment of those from the most deprived areas has increased, although in some cases not at the same rate as for those from the least deprived areas.

- Change in the attainment gap across the Challenge Authorities is varied, and on some measures the gap has widened. However, this is largely not due to performance worsening, but instead that performance in the most deprived areas

has improved but not kept pace with performance of those from the least deprived areas.

- The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in literacy and numeracy has narrowed since 2016/17.

- At S3, 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 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.

Progress in wider education measures

A range of key wider data sources may provide insight into the longer term benefits of the SAC for young people. Across a range of data sources, an increasing proportion of young people from the most deprived areas are in education, employment or training; are in a positive initial and follow up destination after school, or are accessing Higher/Further Education. The gap between young people from the most and least deprived areas has narrowed across all these measures.

- The Annual Participation Measure – the proportion of young people in education, employment or training – shows there has been an overall reduction in the participation gap between those living in the most deprived areas compared to those living in the least deprived areas (9.9 percentage points in 2020, 10.5 percentage points in 2019, 10.8 percentage points in 2018, 11.6 percentage points in 2017).

- The percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination consistently increased between 2009/10 and 2018/19, for leavers from both the most deprived and least deprived areas. The gap in positive initial destinations also decreased in this period. However, the proportions in positive initial destinations fell in 2019/20 for leavers from both the most and least deprived areas and the gap widened. This is likely to at least in part reflect the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

- Overall, a greater proportion of school leavers from the most deprived areas were reported to be in Higher/Further Education as a positive initial destination in 2019/20 (65.7%) than in 2013/14 (58.8%).

- Between 2013/14 and 2019/20, the total Undergraduate Higher Education entrants from the most deprived areas increased from 14,730 to 16,500. In the same period, the proportion of all entrants from the most deprived areas increased from 17.2% to 19.4%.

6.1 Perceptions of progress

9 in 10 schools reported seeing an improvement in closing the poverty-related gap in attainment and/or health and wellbeing, while a similar proportion of schools (88%) expect to see an improvement in the next five years

- 9 in 10 schools reported seeing an improvement in closing the poverty related gap in attainment and/or health and wellbeing as a result of ASF supported approaches. This included 20% that had seen 'a lot' of improvement to date.

- There has been a 12-point increase since 2017 in the proportion of schools reporting an improvement in closing the gap; from 78% in 2017, to 88% in 2018, 91% in 2019, and 90% in 2020.

- Almost 9 out of 10 schools (88%) expected to see improvement in closing the gap over the next five years, although this represents a 10-point reduction since the 2019 survey. This included 21% who expected to see 'a lot' of improvement.

- Survey responses indicated some correlation between schools having already seen improvement, and expectations of further improvement; 67% of those who had seen ‘a lot’ of improvement to date expected to see ‘a lot’ more, compared with 11% of those who had only seen ‘a little’ improvement to date.

The survey showed some variation in views across funding streams, with Schools Programme respondents most likely to report an improvement in closing the gap. Schools who only receive PEF funding, particularly those with a lower PEF allocation, were least likely to report an improvement.

Analysis indicates that the headteachers most likely to have seen progress in closing the gap were those who had seen a change in culture or ethos (more collaborative working and/or embedding the approach to equity) or have improved their understanding of barriers faced by children, young people and families.

Challenge Authority progress reports highlight improvement in terms of the impact of approaches on ‘soft indicators’ of health and wellbeing, with evidence cited of, for example, improved readiness to learn, decreased disruption in the classroom, and improved social and emotional competence.

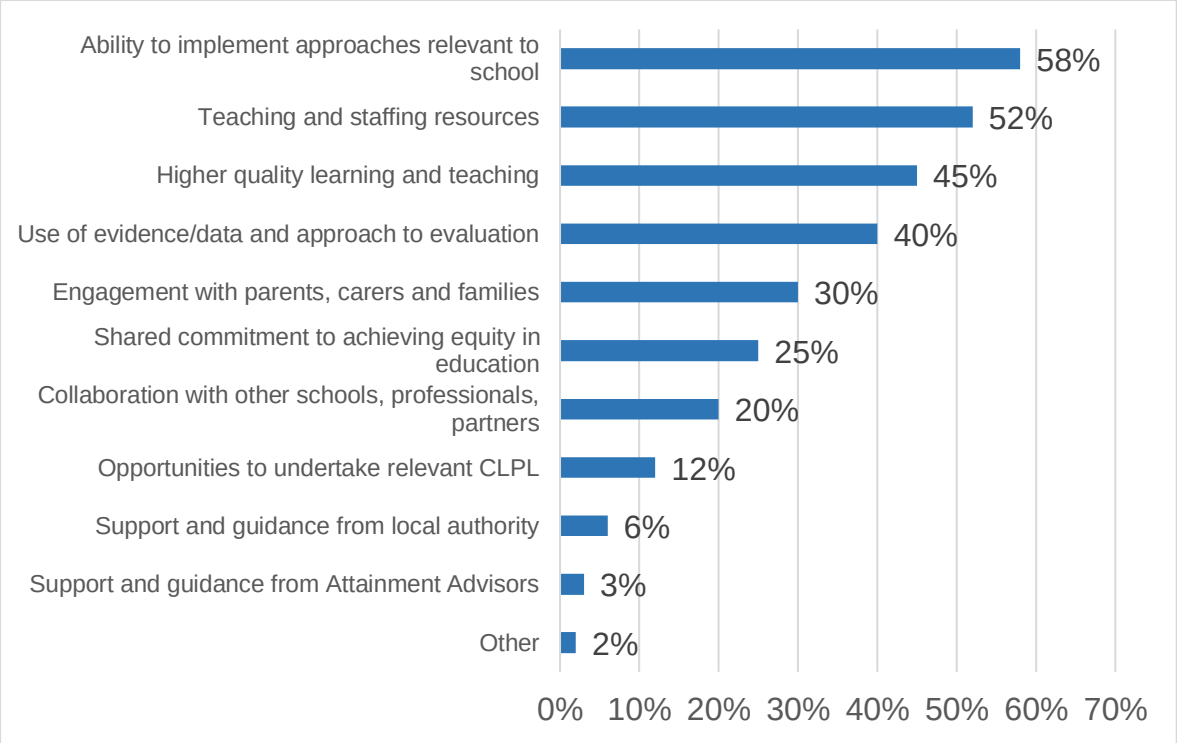
Improvements were also indicated in terms of increasing practitioner confidence, knowledge and practice in supporting health and wellbeing, as a result of professional learning and a strategic focus on health and wellbeing in policy and guidance. Pupil voice was also noted as a further form of impact evidence in terms of improvements in health and wellbeing. A number of Challenge Authorities described data gathered on such measures as social and emotional competence, reduced disruptive behaviours, improved empathy and problem solving skills.

6.2 Factors supporting progress in closing the attainment gap

Ability to implement approaches relevant to the school, teaching and staffing resources, and high quality learning and teaching, were perceived to be the most important factors in supporting closing the attainment gap.

Headteachers were asked to report factors that supported progress towards closing the poverty-related gap in attainment or health and being (Figure 8.1). The most common factors chose were the ability to implement approaches relevant to school (58% of headteachers), teaching and staff resources (52%), higher quality learning and teaching (45%), use of evidence/data (40%) and engagement with families (30%). The results show the importance of flexibility in approach, resources, supporting practitioners, and engaging with families.

Figure 6.1: Factors supporting progress towards closing the poverty-related gap in attainment or health and wellbeing



The factors listed above link back positively to the short/medium term outcomes that were considered in the previous section. For example, ability to implement approaches relevant to school was the most common factor listed as supporting progress, while 93% of headteachers agreed that they were able to select the approach that was most effective for their school. Use of evidence/data was also listed as an important factor to supporting progress, with 84% of headteachers agreeing that they were 'good' or 'very good' at using data to inform development of their approach.

Early analysis from the 2020 Headteacher Survey considered the relationship between perceived progress in closing the gap and other aspects of headteachers' experiences. This analysis indicates that a number of respondent groups are more

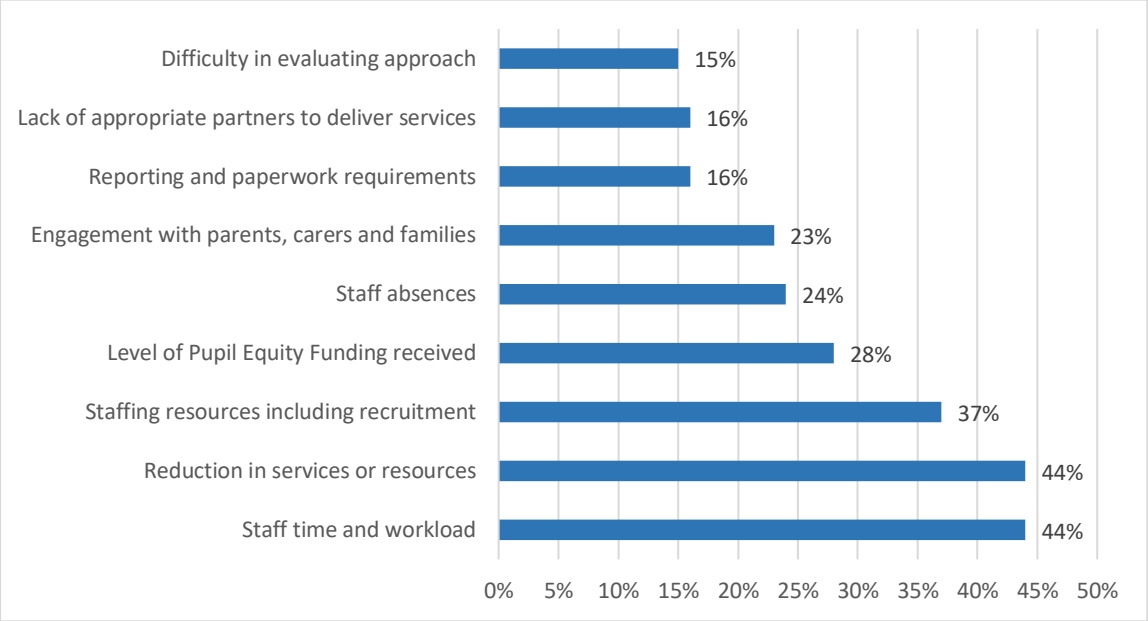
likely to have seen progress in closing the gap. In particular, survey results indicate that key factors in closing the gap include changes of culture or ethos (such as embedding the approach to equity or improved collaborative working), better understanding of barriers faced by pupils and families, skills and knowledge in use of data and evidence, and engagement with families and communities.

Table 6.1: Respondent groups most likely to have seen progress in closing the gap (2020)

Feel that approach to achieving equity has been embedded within school community
Feel they understand the challenges and barriers faced by pupils and parents affected by poverty
Feel ASF has helped to develop staff data and evidence skills
Have seen an increase in collaborative working
Feel their measuring of progress and impact of approaches is ‘very good’ or ‘good’
Feel their use of data and evidence to measure impact is ‘very good’ or ‘good’
Engagement with families and communities has been part of the school approach
Approach to equity has developed from the previous school year

Headteachers were also asked in the survey about the key factors that limited in progress in closing the attainment gap. Staff time and workload, and reduction in other services/resources were seen as the main factors limiting progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Each were mentioned by 44% of respondents. Other commonly mentioned factors included staffing resources and recruitment, level of PEF received and staff absences.

Figure 6.2: Factors limiting progress towards closing the poverty-related gap in attainment or health and wellbeing



6.3 Progress in improving attainment

This section provides detail on the various data and evidence that provide insight into the closing of the attainment gap. This includes attainment measures (ACEL and school leaver attainment) and wider measures related to educational attainment and deprivation.

The assessment of progress in terms of whether the gap is narrowing is nuanced and impacted by many contextual factors. Given the scope/timescales for some data collections, it can be difficult in the short to medium term to assess the extent of progress. Evidence of some of the impacts may not emerge in data until the longer term (for example, SCQF Level 5 and 6 qualifications data will not emerge for a considerable number of years for current primary pupils).

6.3.1 Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL)

ACEL data reports on the percentage of pupils who have achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in Literacy and Numeracy. It covers publicly funded Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3 pupils.

As a result of COVID-19 and the closure of schools in March 2020, the ACEL 2019/20 data collection did not go ahead. Therefore the latest data available is 2018/19, and reliable comparisons can be made back to 2016/17.

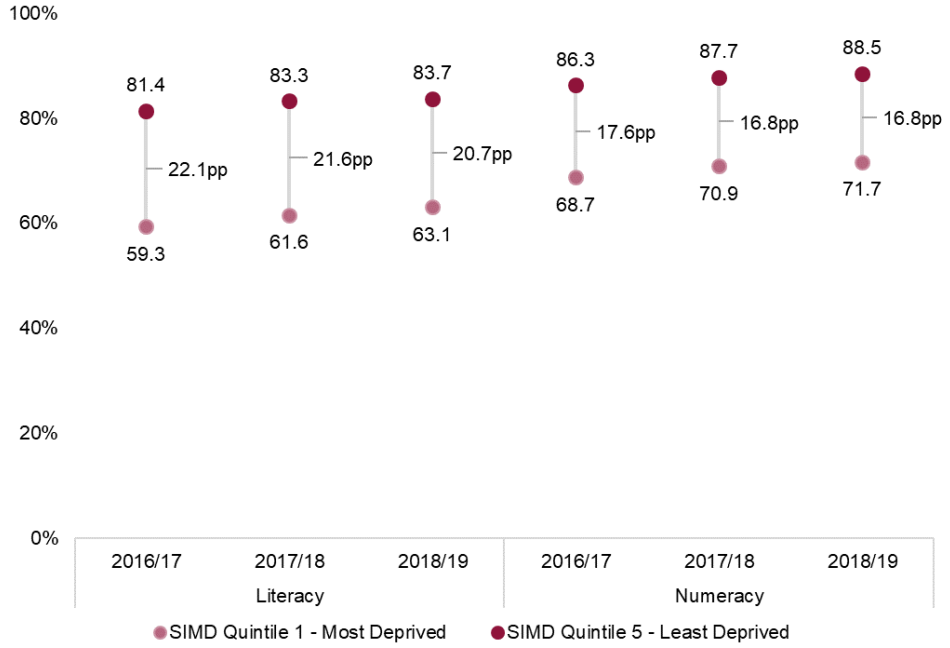
Primary school attainment

The proportion of primary children achieving the expected level in literacy and numeracy has steadily increased between 2016/17 and 2018/19 in Challenge Authorities, non-Challenge Authorities and in Scotland overall.

The gap between the proportion of primary children from the most and least deprived areas that have achieved the expected level in literacy narrowed for Challenge Authorities, non-Challenge Authorities and Scotland overall between 2017/18 and 2018/19. For numeracy, the gap widened slightly for Challenge Authorities and non-Challenge Authorities between 2017/18 and 2018/19, and remained the same at Scotland level.

The attainment of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined) in literacy and numeracy are outlined below, based on analysis of ACEL data for 2016/17 to 2018/19.

Figure 6.3: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils (combined) achieving expected Level in Literacy and Numeracy by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2018/19



Source: Achievement of CfE Levels data collection

In terms of primary school pupils' literacy and numeracy performance:

- The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in literacy has narrowed since 2016/17.

- The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in numeracy narrowed between 2016/17 and 2017/18 and remained stable in 2018/19.

- The proportion of primary pupils achieving the expected level in literacy has steadily increased in Challenge Authorities, from 67.5% in 2016/17 to 69.1% in 2017/18, and 70.8% in 2018/19.

- This proportion has also increased in non-Challenge Authorities (70.1% in 2016/17 to 73.0% in 2018/19) and Scotland overall (69.2% in 2016/17 to 72.3% in 2018/19).

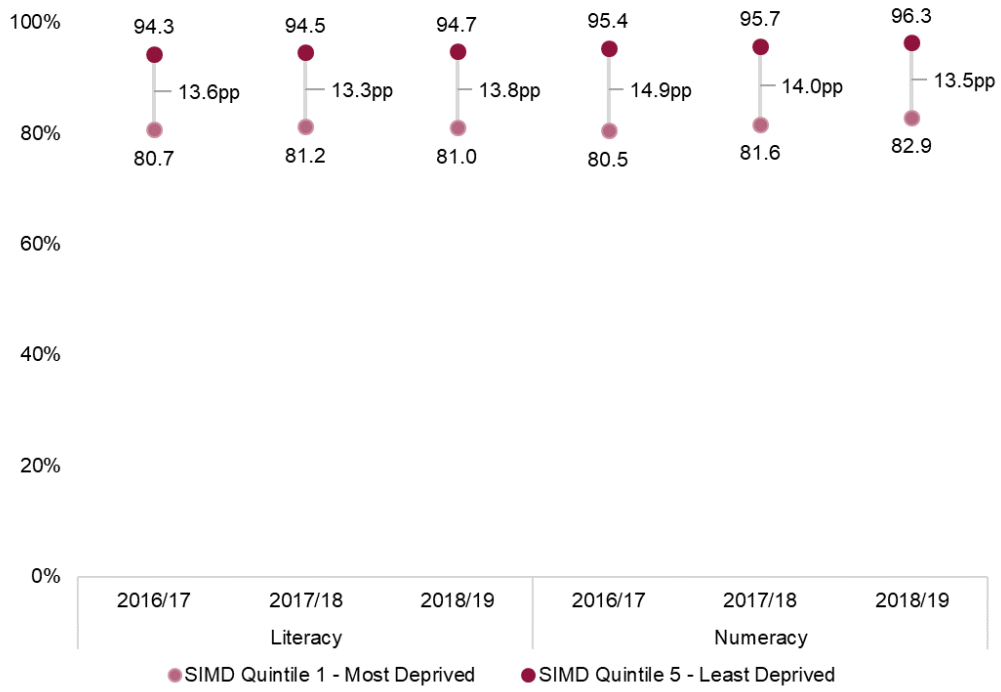
- For Challenge Authorities, the gap between the proportion of Primary pupils from the most and least deprived areas widened from 19.8 percentage points in 2016/17 to 20.9 percentage points in 2017/18, and narrowed to 20.2 in 2018/19.

- At Scotland level, the gap narrowed from 2016/17 to 2018/19. The literacy attainment gap for non-Challenge Authorities closed from 24.7 percentage points in 2016/17 to 22.6 percentage points in 2017/18, and further narrowed to 22.2 percentage points in 2018/19.

Secondary school (S3) attainment

At S3, the gap between the proportion of young people 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 been a narrowing of the gap between the most and least deprived areas for young people in S3 who achieved their expected level in numeracy since 2016/17.

Figure 6.4: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better, by SIMD, for Literacy and Numeracy, 2016/17 to 2018/19



Source: Achievement of CfE Levels data collection

Comparing levels of attainment across Challenge Authorities (combined) and Scotland, from 2016/17 to 2018/19, shows that:

- The proportion of secondary school pupils achieving the expected level in literacy has remained broadly the same in Challenge Authorities, with 87.2% in 2016/17 and 87.1% in 2017/18, as well as 86.9% in 2018/19.

- Over the same period of time, this proportion has increased in non-Challenge Authorities (87.1% in 2016/17 to 88.4% in 2018/19) and at Scotland level (87.1% in 2016/17 to 87.9% in 2018/19).

- The proportion of S3 pupils achieving the expected level in numeracy has risen in Challenge Authorities (combined), from 86.6% in 2016/17, to 87.2% in 2017/18 and 87.3% in 2018/19.

- While there has been an increase in attainment for Challenge Authorities (combined), over the same time period, there has been a greater increase in non-Challenge Authorities (combined) (88.9% in 2016/17 to 91.5% in 2018/19).

Looking at the size of the gap between the proportion of S3 young people from the most and least deprived areas that have achieved the expected level in literacy and numeracy, from 2016/17 to 2018/19:

- For literacy, the gap within Challenge Authorities (combined) widened from 11.3 percentage points to 12.8 percentage points in 2017/18, and further increased to 13.5 percentage points in 2018/19.

- For non-Challenge Authorities, the literacy gap closed each year from 17.2 percentage points in 2016/17, 15.5 percentage points in 2017/18, to 15.2 percentage points 2018/19. Literacy remained broadly stable at a Scotland level, with a slight narrowing from 13.6 percentage points in 2016/17 to 13.3 percentage points in 2017/18, followed by an increase to 13.8 percentage points in 2018/19.

- The numeracy gap between attainment in the most and least deprived areas has narrowed for Challenge Authorities (combined), non-Challenge Authorities (combined) and Scotland overall.

- For non-Challenge Authorities, the gap in numeracy reduced from 16.4 percentage points in 2016/17 to 14.6 percentage points, and to 13.1 percentage points in 2018/19.

- The gap in numeracy for Challenge Authorities reduced from 13.9 percentage points in 2016/17 to 13.6 percentage points in 2017/18, and further narrowed to 13.3 percentage points in 2018/19.

6.3.2 School leaver attainment: percentage of school leavers achieving awards by SCQF level

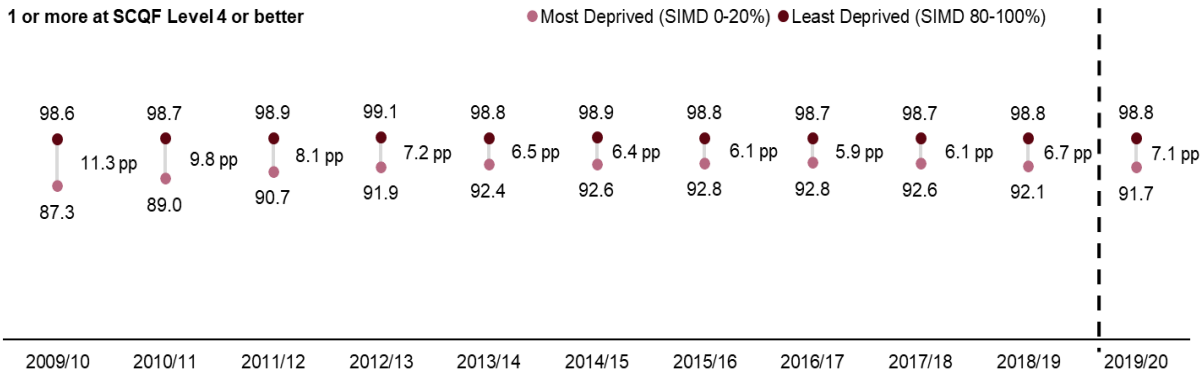
The attainment of school leavers in Scotland is based on the Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations publication. This data includes attainment in National Qualifications achieved throughout all stages of a pupil's schooling, covering all school leavers from publicly funded mainstream schools.

This section will consider the proportion of school leavers attaining one pass or more at a given SCQF level or better (SCQF Level 4 to 6) in Challenge Authorities (combined), non-Challenge Authorities (combined) and Scotland overall, from 2009/10 to 2019/20.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to the cancellation of 2020 National 5 (SCQF Level 5), Higher (SCQF Level 6) and Advanced Higher (SCQF Level 7) exams and external marking of coursework. Grades in these qualifications in 2019/20 were instead based on teacher estimates. For this reason a **dashed line break** in the series has been placed between 2018/19 and 2019/20 to indicate that care must be taken when comparing 2019/20 attainment to that of earlier years. Interpretation must take full account of the different certification methods and a change in the attainment levels in 2019/20 should not be seen as an indication that performance has improved or worsened without further evidence.

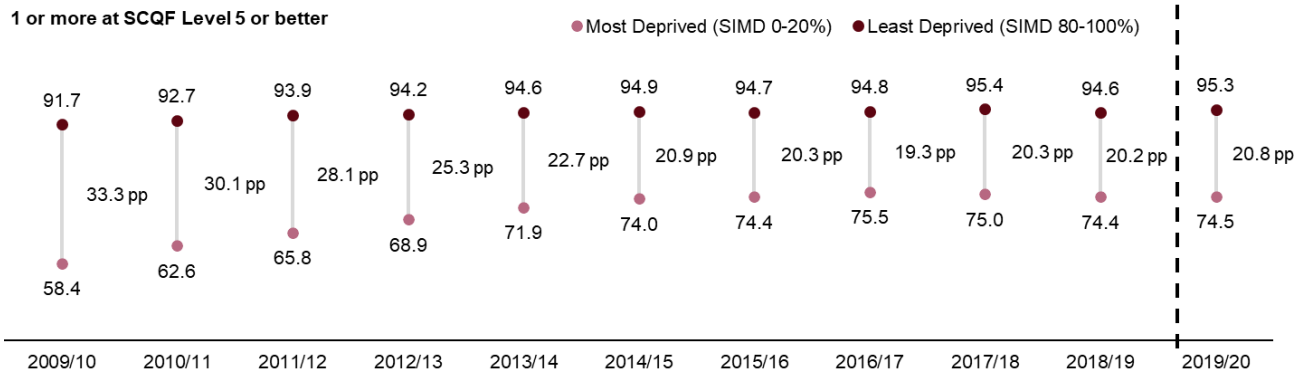
Chart 8.5 shows the proportions of school leavers from the most and least deprived areas who attained 1 pass or more at SCQF Levels 4 or better, 5 or better and 6 or better.

Figure 6.5 Percentage of school leavers by attainment at SCQF Level 4, by SIMD[1] quintile, 2009/10 to 2019/20[a]



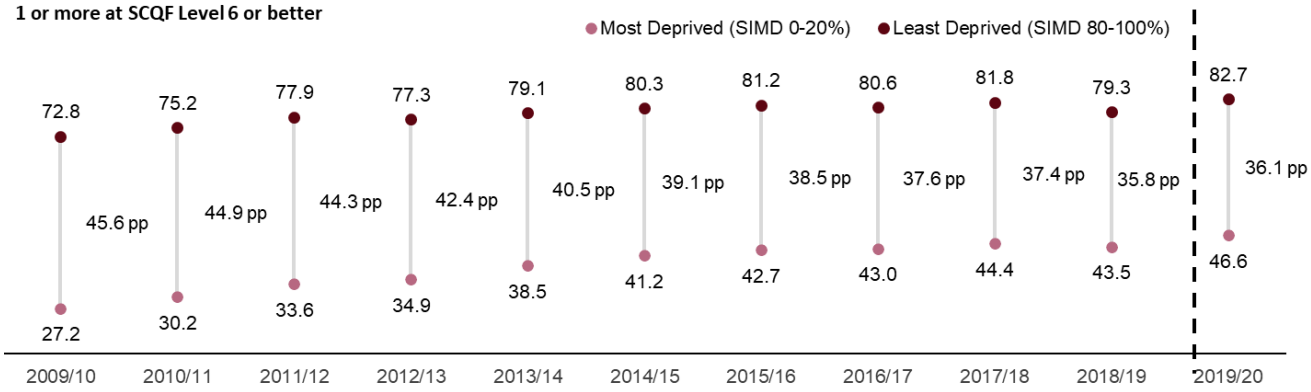
The gap between the proportion of school leavers from the most deprived and least deprived areas attaining 1 pass or more at **SCQF Level 4 or better**, was 7.1 percentage points in 2019/20. This is up from 6.7 percentage points in 2018/19 due to a small reduction in the proportion of leavers from the most deprived areas who attained a pass at this level. Following a steady reduction in the gap between 2009/10 (11.3 percentage points) and 2016/17 (5.9 percentage points), the gap has widened each year and in 2019/20 is the widest it has been since 2012/13.

Figure 6.6: Percentage of school leavers by attainment at SCQF Level 5, by SIMD[1] quintile, 2009/10 to 2019/20



At **SCQF Level 5 or better, the gap** was 20.8 percentage points in 2019/20. This is up from 20.2 percentage points in 2018/19. The proportion attaining 1 pass or more has increased slightly for school leavers from the most deprived areas but increased by more for those from the least deprived areas which has led to the gap widening. Between 2009/10 and 2016/17 the attainment gap at SCQF Level 5 or better reduced steadily from 33.3 percentage points to 19.3 percentage points. Since then it has increased to 20.8 percentage points in 2019/20.

Figure 6.7: Percentage of school leavers by attainment at SCQF Level 6, by SIMD[1] quintile, 2009/10 to 2019/20



At **SCQF Level 6 or better**, the gap was 36.1 percentage points in 2019/20. This is up slightly from 35.8 percentage points in 2018/19. The proportion attaining 1 pass or more has increased for both school leavers from the most and least deprived areas but has increased by more for those from the least deprived areas which has led to the gap widening slightly. Over the longer term, the gap has reduced from 45.6 percentage points in 2009/10.

Challenge Authorities

As outlined above, care should be taken when making comparisons between 2019/20 and earlier years and any increase or decrease should not be interpreted as indicating improving or worsening performance without further evidence.

The proportion of school leavers attaining one pass or more at **SCQF Level 5 or better** for Challenge Authorities (combined) slightly increased in 2019/20 to 84.2% from 83.7% in 2018/19. This represented a return to 2017/18 levels (84.2%) but was down on 84.8% in 2016/17.

A similar pattern was seen at Scotland level and for non-Challenge Authorities (combined) whereby the proportion of leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 increased between 2018/19 and 2019/20, after a decrease the previous year.

The proportion of school leavers attaining one or more pass at **SCQF Level 6 or better** has seen a similar trend across Challenge Authorities (combined), and Scotland overall, from 2016/17 to 2019/20. This trend has featured an increase from 2016/17 to 2017/18, followed by a decrease in 2018/19 and then an increase of more than 3 percentage points in 2019/20.

In Challenge Authorities, the proportion increased from 59.1% in 2016/17 to 61.9% in 2019/20. In non-Challenge Authorities there was an increase from 62.1% to 64.7% in 2019/20.

From 2016/17 to 2019/20, the proportion of school leavers attaining one or more pass at **SCQF Level 7 or better** for Challenge Authorities (combined), non-Challenge Authorities (combined) and Scotland increased slightly in 2017/18, decreased marginally in 2018/19 before increasing by around 4 percentage points in 2019/20.

In Challenge Authorities, the proportion slightly increased from 15.4% in 2016/17 to 15.9% in 2017/18, decreased to 14.8% in 2018/19 and rose to 18.7% in 2019/20. In non-Challenge Authorities there was an increase from 21.0% in 2016/17 to 22.0% in 2017/18, a decrease to 20.9% in 2018/19 then an increase to 25.1% in 2019/20. At Scotland level there was an increase from 19.3% in 2016/17 to 20.2% in 2017/18, a decrease to 19.1% in 2018/19 and an increase in 2019/20 to 23.2%.

Gap between school leavers from the most and least deprived areas

At **SCQF Level 5**:

- The percentage point gap between the proportion of school leavers from the most and least deprived areas attaining one or more pass reduced slightly for Challenge Authorities and at Scotland level between 2016/17 to 2018/19.

- The gap widened for Challenge Authorities (combined) from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (18.3 to 18.8 percentage points) before decreasing again slightly in 2018/19 (18.5 percentage points) and widening to 19.4 percentage points in 2019/20.

- A similar pattern is seen at Scotland level with 19.3% in 2016/17 increasing to 20.3% in 2017/18, a slight decrease in 2018/19 to 20.2% and an increase to 20.8 percentage points in 2019/20.

- In non-Challenge authorities (combined), the gap has consistently increased between 2016/17 to 2019/20 from 21.7 percentage points in 2016/17, to 22.7

percentage points in 2017/18, 22.9 percentage points in 2018/19 and 23.2 percentage points in 2019/20.

At **SCQF Level 6** or better:

- The gap between the proportion of school leavers from the most and least deprived areas that have attained one pass or more narrowed across Challenge Authorities (combined) between 2016/17 and 2019/20.

- The gap declined steadily from 2016/17 (37.9 percentage points), 2017/18 (36.3 percentage points), 2018/19 (35.2 percentage points) to 2019/20 (35.1 percentage points).

- The gap widened in non-Challenge Authorities (combined) from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (40.3 to 41.1 percentage points), and subsequently decreased in 2018/19 (39.6 percentage points) and again in 2019/20 (39.5 percentage points).

At **SCQF Level 7** or better:

- The gap at SCQF Level 7 or better for Challenge Authorities (combined) decreased between 2016/17 and 2017/18 and subsequently closed further between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

- The gap narrowed for Challenge Authorities (combined) from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (20.9 to 20.4 percentage points), and decreased again in 2018/19 (18.8 percentage points), rising to 23.4 percentage points in 2019/20.

- In non-Challenge authorities (combined), the gap increased slightly from 26.5 percentage points in 2016/17, to 26.6 percent in 2017/18 before reducing to 24.3 percentage points in 2018/19 before increasing to 28.6 percentage points in 2019/20.

6.3.3 Annual Participation Measure (APM)

The participation gap between those who live in the most deprived and least deprived areas narrowed year-on-year between 2017 and 2020.

The APM is another measure for considering progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, set out in the NIF. It is produced by Skills Development Scotland and reports on the economic and employment activity of the 16-19 year old cohort.

The proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment was 92.1% in 2020 which represents an increase of 0.5 percentage points compared to 91.6% in 2019. This is the highest rate since the inception of the APM. The 2019 figure showed a decrease of 0.2 percentage points compared to the 2018 figure (91.8%). Previous figures were 91.1% (2017) and 90.4% (2016).

Between 2019 and 2020 the participation rate rose in 20 of the 32 local authorities. Although there remains variation in the participation rate by local authority, the gap between the highest and lowest participation rates reduced from 9.3 percentage points in 2017 to 7.5 percentage points in 2020. Similarly the participation gap between those who lived in the most deprived areas and those in the least deprived areas continues to show narrowing with a gap of 9.9 percentage points in 2020 (compared to 12.9 percentage points in 2016, 11.5 percentage points in 2017, 10.8 percentage points in 2018 and 10.5 percentage points in 2019).

Looking specifically at the participation rate in the Challenge Authorities, seven of the nine recorded a slight increase between year 4 and year 5 of the ASF. This represents an increase from 2019 where six of the nine recorded a slight increase between Year 3 and Year 4 of the ASF. In 2018 seven out of the nine recorded an increase between Year 2 and Year 3 of the ASF.

in the rate of participation amongst those within the most deprived areas. With regards to Challenge Authorities:

- In Year 5 of the ASF, four Challenge Authorities had a smaller or similar participation gap compared to Scotland.
- Between Year 4 and 5 of the ASF, the participation gap narrowed in seven Challenge Authorities.
- In Year 5 of the ASF, the participation rate for those living in the 20% most deprived areas was higher or similar in four Challenge Authorities, compared to Scotland.
- Between Year 4 and 5 of the ASF, the participation rate for those living in the 20% most deprived areas increased or was maintained in six Challenge Authorities.

6.4 Progress in improving Health and Wellbeing measures

6.4.1 Attendance rates

The attendance rate of pupils from the most deprived areas decreased between 2016/17 and 2018/19.

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%).

Pupils from the most deprived areas had lower attendance rates, with those living in the most deprived areas having an attendance rate that was 5.0 percentage points lower than the pupils living in the least deprived areas. The gap in attendance rates for primary school pupils increased between 2016/17 and 2018/19 and, whilst the gap is greater in secondary schools, it remained the same in years 2016/17 – 2018/19. Whilst the attendance of pupils from the least deprived areas remained fairly stable over time, the attendance rate of the most deprived pupils decreased.

Attainment Advisor 5 year local authority reports also included evidence on attendance. A few reports detailed improvement in the overall attendance of learners affected by poverty over time and in narrowing the attendance gap. A few also identify improvement in the attendance of looked after children and young people.

Data indicates that in the majority of local authorities, it was recognised that there is a steady or persistent gap in the attendance of children and young people affected by poverty and those who are not. Nevertheless, there is evidence across individual local authorities of focused approaches to attendance which have successfully improved the attendance of targeted learners, increasing attendance and positively impacting upon attainment. Approaches taken to effectively improve attendance for targeted learners and so impact upon attainment were varied and tailored to individual local authorities and schools. For example, participation among children and young people who are care-experienced has improved in a variety of ways through supported curricular and wider experiences such as school equipment, excursions and access to leisure facilities.

6.4.2 Exclusion rates

While the exclusion rate for pupils from the most deprived areas is higher than that for the least deprived, the exclusion rate has been falling year on year since 2006/07.

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 most deprived areas were 35.4 per 1,000 pupils compared with 8.2 per 1,000 pupils living in the least deprived areas. Secondary schools had a higher exclusion rate than primary schools and the gap in exclusion rates was also higher in secondary schools.

From 2014/15 to 2016/17, the primary exclusion rate for pupils from the most deprived areas decreased for four Challenge Authorities. The gap in secondary exclusion rates narrowed in six of the nine Challenge Authorities between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

Exclusion rates are around seven times as high among looked after children (152 per 1,000 pupils) compared to all pupils. However, this rate has fallen substantially, from 397 per 1,000 pupils in 2009/10 to 152 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19.

Exclusion rates for children and young people affected by poverty is reducing as a result of an increased focus on inclusion. However it is also recognised that children and young people affected by poverty continue to be at higher risk of being excluded than their more affluent peers. There was no notable difference in trends or patterns across the Challenge Authority, Schools Programme and PEF strands of the SAC programme with regards to inclusion. Almost all local authorities were observed to have approaches and initiatives which are mitigating against risks of exclusion for all and particularly those affected by poverty.

6.4.3 Health and wellbeing measures

Information on health and wellbeing is available from the Scottish Health Survey and the Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS). The findings are based on two variables: scores on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which measures emotional and behaviour problems, and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). Mental wellbeing is measures using the WEMWBS questionnaire and is used as a sub measure to report progress around health and wellbeing in the ASF Evaluation.

Total Difficulties Score

The social, emotional and behavioural development of children has been measured via the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire designed for use with the 3-16 age group.

The SDQ comprises 25 questions covering themes such as consideration, hyperactivity, malaise, mood, sociability, obedience, anxiety and unhappiness. It is used to measure five aspects of development: emotional symptoms; conduct problems; hyperactivity/ inattention; peer relationship problems; and pro-social behaviour.

A score was calculated for each of the five aspects, as well as an overall 'total difficulties' score which was generated by summing the scores from all the domains, except pro-social behaviour. The total difficulties score ranged from 0 to 40 with a higher score indicating greater evidence of difficulties. There are established thresholds indicating 'normal' (score of 13 or less), 'borderline' (14-16) or 'abnormal' scores (17 or above).

Regardless of age, children in the most deprived areas were more likely to have a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score. This is summarised in Table 8.2 and further detail is given in the paragraphs that follow.

Table 6.2: Total Difficulties Score – By Deprivation

	Year	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD)	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD)	Gap
		%	%	Percentage points
Total difficulties score (aged 4-12)	2012/15	22	6	16
	2014/17	22	10	12
	2015/18	25	10	15
	2016/19	25	9	16
Total difficulties score (aged 13 & 15)	2015	34	26	8
	2018	42	34	8

Children aged 4-12 years old

Children in the most deprived areas were more likely to have a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score (25%) than those in the least deprived (9%) in 2016/19. Whilst the gap of 16 percentage points initially decreased (12 percentage points in 2014/17 and 15 percentage points in 2015/18), it returned to 16 percentage points in 2016/19.

Children aged 13 and 15 years old

Children in the most deprived areas were more likely to have a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score (42%) than those in the least deprived (34%) in 2018. The gap was also 8 percentage points in 2015 (the proportion of children aged 13 and 15 with a borderline or abnormal total difficulties score in the most and least deprived areas both increased and by the same amount.

Health and wellbeing sub-measures

Mental wellbeing score

Overall, mental wellbeing among 13 to 15 year olds decreased with age for all children. Mental wellbeing recorded higher levels for 13 to 15 year old boys than for girls. The figure below presents data by year group and gender.

Mental wellbeing showed a correlation with areas of deprivation. Overall, pupils in the least deprived areas had a higher WEMWBS mean score indicating better mental wellbeing than those in the most deprived areas. Table 8.3 shows the mental wellbeing score by those most and least deprived and displays the gap between the two.

Table 6.3: Mental Wellbeing mean score – By Deprivation, 2018

	All children	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD)	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD)	Gap
Mental Wellbeing Score (13 year old boys)	50.0	48.4	51.2	2.8
Mental Wellbeing Score (13 year old girls)	46.3	45.0	47.0	2.0
Mental Wellbeing Score (15 year old boys)	48.3	48.0	48.7	0.7
Mental Wellbeing Score (15 year old girls)	43.3	41.9	43.9	2.0

6.5 Progress in wider education measures

6.5.1 International comparisons

Social background is less of a factor in performance in PISA for pupils in Scotland than the OECD international average.

Scotland's participation in PISA allows for international comparisons of the impact of social background on attainment. Analysis shows that there is a weaker link between background and attainment in Scotland than the OECD average, and that the link is weaker than it was in 2009.

PISA uses an Index of Economic, Social and Cultural Status (ESCS) to analyse results by social background. It is constructed from the responses given by students in their background questionnaire and collects information on parental education and occupation, learning resources in the home and cultural possessions. This index is not directly comparable to the SIMD. The ESCS index is used to derive a number of measures, each of which tell us something different about the impact of social background on performance.

Resilient students

A 'resilient' student is one who achieves a high score in PISA despite having a disadvantaged social background. PISA results show that the proportion of disadvantaged students who were academically resilient was higher in Scotland (13.9%) than on average across OECD countries and economies (11.3%). This marks the overall progress made on academic resilience since 2012.

Strength of relationship between ESCS and reading performance

The percentage share of the variation in performance explained by ESCS tells us how strong the relationship is between reading ability and social background. The strength of relationship between social disadvantage and a pupil's score was lower in Scotland than the OECD average. About 8% of the variation in Scotland could be explained by socio-economic factors. This was similar to the position for reading in 2015 (9%) and 2012 (11%), but less than 2009 (14%). The strength of relationship between social background and reading performance in PISA is weaker now than it was in 2009.

Variation in score by ESCS

The ESCS gradient, shows how much score varies on average with each step (one point) in social background. The extent of the relationship between deprivation and reading performance (or "gradient") in Scotland was lower than the OECD average at around 32 points. Therefore, for every one point change in ESCS, reading score changes by 32 points. This is similar to 2015 (32 points) and 2012 (35 points) but better than 2009 (44 points). Therefore the impact that social background has on reading performance in PISA is lower now that it was in 2009.

6.5.2 School leaver positive initial destinations

The percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination consistently increased between 2009/10 and 2018/19, for leavers from both the most deprived and least deprived areas. The gap in positive initial destinations also decreased in this period. However, the proportions in positive initial destinations fell in 2019/20 for leavers from both the most and least deprived areas and the gap widened. This is likely to at least in part reflect the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

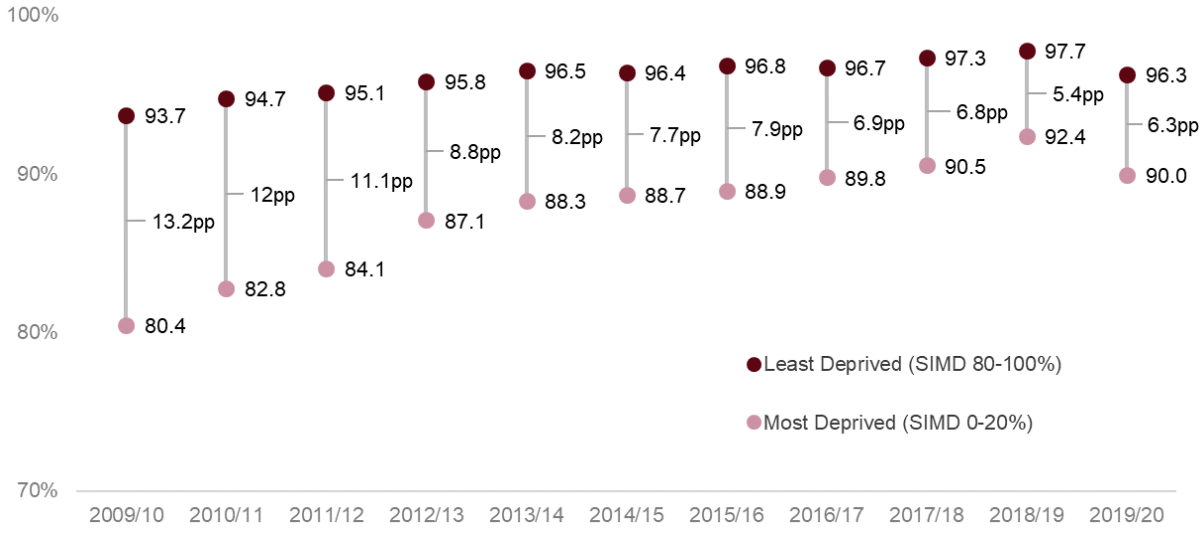
In 2018/19, the proportion of school leavers in positive initial destinations from the most deprived areas was 92.4% compared to 88.3% in 2013/14. Over the same period, the deprivation gap between the most deprived and least deprived areas reduced from 8.2 percentage points to 5.4 percentage points.

The 2019/20 figures on school leavers' initial destinations will reflect the impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on choices made by, and opportunities available to, pupils upon leaving school during the pandemic.

The proportion of school leavers in positive destinations fell from 95.0% to 93.3% in 2019/20. The proportion of school leavers in employment fell from 22.9% in 2018/19 to 16.2% in 2019/20. 44.2% of school leavers were in Higher Education, the highest proportion of all categories and the highest percentage since consistent records began in 2009/10.

Figure 6.7 shows that the percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination has decreased in 2019/20, both for leavers from the **most deprived and least deprived areas**. The proportion of school leavers in a positive initial destination has fallen by more amongst leavers from the most deprived areas than it has amongst those from the least deprived areas which has led to an increase in the deprivation gap, from 5.4 percentage points in 2018/19 to 6.3 percentage points in 2019/20.

Figure 6.8: Percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination, by SIMD, 2009/10 to 2019/20



Between 2015/16 and 2018/19, there was a shift in positive initial destinations for school leavers from the most deprived areas, with a greater proportion in Higher Education (25.9%, up from 24.0%) and employment (21.3% compared to 21.2%). The proportion that were unemployed (seeking or not seeking work) decreased from 10.7% in 2013/14 to 7.2% in 2018/19. However, this increased to 9.0% in 2019/20 after the impact of coronavirus. Further education remains the most common initial destination for school leavers from the most deprived areas (37.0%). These 2019/20 figures will reflect the impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on choices made by, and opportunities available to, pupils upon leaving school during the pandemic.

Overall, a greater proportion of school leavers from the most deprived areas were reported to be in Higher/Further Education as a positive initial destination in 2018/19 (62.9%) than in 2013/14 (58.9%). Despite a reduction in overall positive destination for this group in 2019/20, the proportion of school leavers from the most deprived areas reported to be in Higher/Further Education increased again to 65.7%.

Improvements in initial positive destinations for all featured strongly in Education Scotland 5 year evidence, with a recognition that the gap between leavers living in the areas most and least affected by poverty is narrowing. This includes looked after children; the proportion of young people who were looked after and achieving positive destinations has been improving. This was described as fluctuating around or above the national average for almost all of the local authorities reporting on this.

6.5.3 Access to higher education

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2014-15 set out the ambition that a child born at that time in one of Scotland's most deprived communities should, by the time of leaving school, have the same chance of going to university as one born in one of the country's least deprived areas.

The Commission on Widening Access set out a series of targets to realise the ambition of equality of access to higher education in Scotland. This includes that, by 2021, students from the most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 16% of full-time first-degree entrants to Scottish universities as a whole. This target was effectively met early, with 15.9% of entrants being from the most deprived areas, an increase from 13.9% in 2014/15.

Between 2013/14 and 2019/20, the total Undergraduate Higher Education entrants from the most deprived areas increased from 14,730 to 16,500. In the same period, the proportion of all entrants from the most deprived areas increased from 17.2% to 19.4%.

The majority of Higher Education Institutions (12 out of 18) increased their proportion of those in the most deprived areas between 2017-18 and 2018-19. Some have made substantial advances in this single year. For example, University of St Andrews has increased its portion of first-degree entrants from the most deprived areas from 7.5% to 10.6% and University of Edinburgh from 8.1% to 10.8%. Among the pre-1992 universities, University of Strathclyde (17.4%) and University of Dundee (16.2%) show the largest improvement.

There has also been an increase in the proportion of students from the most deprived areas entering Further Education. In the period between 2014/15 and 2018/19, the proportion of students from the most deprived areas in Further Education Institutions increased from 22.9% to 24.8%.

6.6 Sustainability of improvements

A great majority (84%) of headteachers indicated that the approach to achieving equity is embedded within the school community to either a great extent (35%) or a moderate extent (49%).k

A key focus of the ASF approaches is sustainability – how these approaches will be maintained if they prove to be successful. The more sustainable the approach is, the more successful it is perceived to be. Many schools attribute the sustainability of approaches to career long professional learning as a means of embedding approaches in schools.

Around a third (34%) of headteachers in the 2020 survey expected that the ASF supported improvement they had seen to date will be sustainable beyond the years of funding. Views were more positive on the extent to which the focus on equity will be sustainable beyond the years of funding; 58% felt that this will be the case, a 17-point increase on the 2019 survey. Survey findings show some variation across key respondent groups, with primary headteachers less likely to feel that the focus on equity will be sustainable beyond funding.

Survey findings suggested a correlation between the views on sustainability and perceived improvement to date. Those who had seen improvement to date in the poverty-related attainment gap were more likely to expect improvements to be sustainable beyond the funding period.

A great majority (84%) of headteachers indicated that the approach to achieving equity is embedded within the school community to either a great extent (35%) or a moderate extent (49%). No headteachers indicated that the approach wasn't embedded at all.

Local authority perspectives

At the broader local authority level, evidence from the Local Authority Survey 2019 indicated that local authorities were broadly positive regarding the extent to which the focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap would be sustainable beyond the years of the fund. All 24 local authorities that responded to this survey question agreed that the focus on closing the gap would be sustainable to some degree (8 to a great extent, 11 to some extent and 5 to a limited extent). Of the seven Challenge Authorities who responded to this question on sustainability of focus, three viewed the focus would be sustainable to a great extent, and four to some extent.

The 2019 Local Authority Survey explored factors impacting on the sustainability of focus. Sustainability concerns related to staffing and budget were seen as key, following withdrawal of funding. Local authority respondents also indicated that activities such as collaboration, 'pooling' of resources, good practice sharing, building capacity and focusing on staff professional development would help deliver sustainability.

Factors promoting or hindering sustainability

Analysis of the 2019 Headteacher Survey data indicated that **staff training and development** was, by some margin, the most common factor for schools who expect their improvement and/or focus on equity to be sustainable. More than half of those who expected their approach to be sustainable referred to staff training, development and capacity building. This included development of existing staff (including embedding practice) to ensure the sustainability of their approach, and training and development of new staff.

The importance of staff is also reflected in **'loss of staffing and skills'** being by far the most common reason given for schools who felt their approach would not be sustainable. Some respondents felt that schools would lose staff capacity in the absence of ASF support, and that this would have an inevitable negative impact on their ability to maintain their approach to closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Actions to support, encourage and/or plan for sustainability were also explored in Local Authority Survey 2019 responses. In addition to affirmations of commitment to sustainability, there were also statements of specific actions both at local authority and at school level. There was evidence of both strategic approaches and actions towards sustainability, as well as actions at a local level and within specific initiatives.

Within Challenge Authority progress reports, several made explicit mention of the extent to which authorities were considering and/or addressing sustainability in their local authority. This included, for example, specific actions such as taking steps to rationalise interventions or develop an exit strategy; as well as broader focus on culture change and ethos, partnership working, capacity building (such as provision of career long professional learning (CLPL) to staff groups); and focus on leadership.

7. Impact of COVID-19 on the closing of the poverty-related attainment gap

The Equity Audit, published in January 2021, sought to investigate the impact that COVID-19 and resulting school building closures had on the educational experiences and attainment of children and young people, in particular those affected by poverty.

The Equity Audit comprised two complementary pieces of work – an evidence review of the emerging literature on the impact of school building closures on educational experiences in the context of pupils' social and economic background, and 54 Scottish school case studies exploring the key themes from the evidence review namely health and wellbeing, learner experience, attainment and mitigations.

In addition to the Equity Audit, the ASF Year 5 evaluation was enhanced to include the consideration of the impact of COVID-19 on the development of approaches. The Local Authority Survey 2020 and Headteacher Survey 2020 were used in the ASF Year 5 evaluation, with respondents invited to report on each of the two key time periods (prior to COVID-19 and the period of school building closures between March and June 2020).

Educational attainment will have undoubtedly been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland, as is the case globally; this will have had an impact on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland in recent months.

7.1 Impact on educational experiences

The evidence review showed that there were considerable differences in remote teaching provision experienced by children and young people, with variation in experience for children and young people from more and less advantaged backgrounds. The review also highlighted differences regarding teaching time/time spent learning experienced and amount of time spent on home learning between pupils from more and less advantaged backgrounds. There were also considerable differences in access to resources to support home learning in relation to children and young people from more and less advantaged backgrounds (digital resources, space to learn, parental support). Evidence pointed to the importance of access to technology for children and young people. Where there were gaps in such access – with socio-economically disadvantaged pupils most negatively affected – this had a direct impact on their learning experience and engagement.

The case study interviews highlighted that significant numbers of parents found it difficult to support their children's learning at home and believed that this negatively impacted on children's learning and progress.

According to the findings from the ASF Year 5 evaluation, whilst family and community engagement aspects had frequently been driven forward at pace in order to respond to the challenges created as a result of COVID-19, some planned aspects of family and community engagement had been paused or adapted as a result of the school building closures. Adaptations included the development of virtual approaches. For some, work at the local authority level progressed on a more limited level during the school building closures, whilst at the school level engagement with families and communities increased.

7.2 Impact on educational attainment and the poverty-related attainment gap

In terms of the impact of school building closures on pupils' learning overall, there is a considerable body of evidence which has emerged to date; international evidence generally shows that school building closures are likely to have had a negative effect on pupil progress and attainment.

The Equity Audit found a number of studies that had been undertaken which specifically considered the impact of COVID-19 school building closures on socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. The literature highlighted evidence of exacerbated impacts for pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds, pointing to increased inequality of educational attainment as a result of COVID-19 school building closures. Studies have indicated that pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are likely to experience a larger decline in learning compared to their more advantaged counterparts, with the suggestion that such increased inequality may persist over time.

The majority of participants in the Equity Audit case study interviews reported that the first period of remote learning had had a negative impact on the progress of most children and young people and that this varied by factor such as socio-economic status, English language proficiency, age and stage; the impact was most apparent in P1 and P2 children.

In addition, the majority of teachers reported that higher numbers of children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds showed regression in core literacy and numeracy skills when schools re-opened after the March-August 2020 closure of school buildings.

In terms of perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap, the majority (13 of 15) of local authorities who responded to the Local Authority Survey 2020 were of the view that COVID-19 had impacted on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap (five indicated this to a great extent, and eight to some extent). A further two local authority respondents viewed COVID-19 as having impacted on progress to a limited extent.

Local authorities perceived a range of factors associated with COVID-19 to have impacted on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap, and it was recognised that there remained a great deal of uncertainty regarding the extent of the impact. Several local authorities referenced internal data gathering exercises undertaken, which had sought to understand and quantify the impacts at the local authority level. A number pointed to emerging evidence of the impact of COVID-19 widening the gap between most and least affluent pupils at the local authority level.

In the 2020 Headteacher Survey, the great majority of schools (95%) felt that COVID-19 and school building closures had at least some impact on their progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. This included 61% who felt that COVID-19 and school building closures had a 'significant impact' on their progress. Secondary schools and those with middle to higher PEF allocations were most likely

to feel that their progress had been significantly affected by COVID-19 and school building closures.

7.3 Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on closing the poverty-related attainment gap

A number of financial and practical measures have been put in place to support education recovery. This includes additional investment to support the recruitment of additional teachers/support staff and the provision of devices and connectivity to people suffering from digital exclusion. Education Scotland has worked with stakeholders to develop the National e-Learning Offer alongside a wide range of professional learning and resources to support practitioners. The Scottish Government has implemented increased flexibility to redirect ASF to help mitigate the impacts of school building closures on the most disadvantaged families.

At a local level the most common mitigations were the provision of access to digital hardware and connectivity, and physical or paper-based resources to support remote learning.

Reference was made in the findings from the 2020 Local Authority Survey to increasing numbers of families experiencing poverty as a result of the pandemic, and of the need to put in place appropriate responses. Longer-term plans were frequently paused in order to focus on short-term priorities, but all respondents described a continuing focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap throughout the period of school building closures. Rather, the focus was on limiting and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on children and families affected by socio-demographic disadvantage, whilst recognising increases in socio-economic disadvantage because of COVID-19. Local authorities variously described a range of actions in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, including:

- adjustments, adaptations or pausing of existing activity
- altering governance and funding to respond to emerging challenges
- creating recovery plans and longer-term planning
- planning for future potential periods of school building closures, or for pupils self-isolating
- considering the provision of specialised support to address the needs of those pupils not making expected progress
- addressing digital connectivity challenges, particularly in rural areas; and
- developing practice for remote learning.

Local authority approaches during the initial stages of the pandemic developed in a range of ways. A number of local authorities had undertaken reviews to consider planned activities with decisions subsequently made to pause or progress work related to current and emerging priorities and needs. One local authority noted it had undertaken an equity audit to support future planning. Flexibility, agility and creativity were key aspects highlighted during this period of review and adaptation.

Large-scale changes were introduced in order to adapt to meet the challenges of providing remote learning, frequently ‘pivoting’ in very quick time-periods to meet the unprecedented challenges presented by responding to COVID-19. This included the

introduction of a wealth of responses, from providing physical resources (e.g. food parcels, home-learning packs), equity-related advice and information, signposting to other sources of support, as well as the continuation of face-to-face support where possible. Prioritisation of health and wellbeing support was a common theme in responses, ranging from increased pastoral support and support for mental health through to physical support such as linking up with food banks. The creation of new partnerships with other agencies in order to take this activity forward, in particular with third sector organisations, were commonly highlighted. Cross-departmental responses were also highlighted, such as joint working through social work and education.

According to the ASF Local Authority Survey findings from 2020, schools were using data to provide support during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, a Challenge Authority described its schools' use of data and knowledge of families to provide food to vulnerable families, signpost to sources of third sector support, welfare rights advice, identification of mental health and wellbeing issues. This provision was supported by key SFDW roles based within education hubs.

A family learning project continued to engage with 57 registered families and identified a further 516 families who required support during 'lockdown'. Each family was assigned a Key Worker to provide advice and support with access to online classrooms, outdoor activities and active learning programmes. Activities included a forum for parents/carers to share experiences, links with wider community support, and virtual learning support with literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing.

In the March to June 2020 period, respondents highlighted aspects of collaboration associated with the closure of school buildings and transition to remote learning. A range of new collaborations with a wider range of partners, as well as strengthened collaborations with existing partners, were identified as local authorities sought quickly to respond to the demands and needs of responding to COVID-19, with several respondents pointing to the pace of this.

In one local authority, all programme leads were redirected to support the delivery of a blended model of in-school and at-home learning, involving digital, independent and active learning. Consideration was given to the specific requirements of children and young people with additional support needs, areas of transition and families most in need of support. Key areas of focus included engagement with partners to support a wider group of identified vulnerable children and families, an online platform of resources and activities to support parents/carers, and targeted advice for practitioners through virtual networks and webinars. An immediate increase in health and well-being concerns was identified, which led to the creation of a partnership - Vulnerable Children's Panel - a multi- agency whole systems approach, which provided bespoke packages of support ensuring that the identified needs and well-being of children and families were addressed.

One local authority sought to revisit the focus of workstream priorities and interventions to adapt to COVID-19. As a result, refocused projects were delivered during school closure which led to unexpected, new and different positive outcomes such as identifying opportunities for sustainability, leadership and improvements in professional learning. The local authority has also placed an increased emphasis on utilising performance data, developing collaboration opportunities, developing their digital strategy, and identifying the most successful interventions.

It was broadly recognised in the analytical work informing the ASF Year 5 evaluation that COVID-19 has had, and will continue to, impact on sustainability of focus to some extent. Local authority perspectives reflected on the reprioritisation which took place during the March to June 2020 period of school building closures, including a greater focus on addressing the immediate challenges of responding to COVID-19 and an increased focus on health and wellbeing. There was also a broad affirmation of sustained focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The gap is closing

It is clear from the above that significant progress is being **made.** This can be seen across short-, medium- and long-term outcomes, and is supported by strong evidence of a system-wide endeavour to establish the platform for the next phase of improvement. **However, while the gap is closing, this remains a complex and long-term endeavour.**

Further, while there are positive indications of progress, there are also variations in the pace of progress across the country. In addition, we know that the impact of COVID-19 is likely to have placed further pressure on the gap.

The report draws attention to a number of powerful findings:

1. **Over the 5 year time period a number of key elements have been put in place that provide strong foundations for on-going progress. These strengths of the Scottish approach are**:

- There is a systemic change in terms of culture, ethos and leadership with a focus on equity becoming more embedded and sustained in schools, communities and local authorities. A greater awareness and understanding of the barriers facing children and young people adversely affected by socio-economic disadvantage has emerged. This has led to a wide range of approaches and interventions being implemented to meet the needs of children and young people.

- The role of local authorities has been instrumental in driving forward a strategic vision for equity at local level, ensuring this is a central component in school and local authority improvement plans. There has also been a shift towards many local authorities using core resources, including core education funding, to improve outcomes for learners experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

- Clear leadership, direction and accountability by senior leaders in national government, local government and in schools, supported by effective strategic planning on equity, is helping to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children, young people and families.

- The most recent evidence from the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) acknowledged the progress that is being made in Scottish education to close the attainment gap through the SAC and wider education policies:

"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."

2. There are improved ways of working to deliver equity

Enhanced learning and teaching and using data for improvement

- Investment in high quality professional learning and development opportunities has resulted in higher quality learning, teaching and assessment focusing on achieving equity.

- Literacy and Numeracy interventions are imbedded in most schools and integral to improved learning and teaching approaches with a focus on equity.

- Schools are increasingly confident in using data, and are seeing the benefit from doing so.

- Local authority strategies have been developed to reflect a number of broad priorities, based on attainment gap data, previously successful approaches and engagement with headteachers and other partners or services.

Focus on health and wellbeing

- Improving health and wellbeing is a priority for schools in closing the attainment gap, with many examples of innovative and collaborative practice. The most successful interventions have resulted in fewer exclusions from school better punctuality; improvements in behaviour at school, healthy family eating, increased pupil motivation and engagement and increased resilience among pupils.

- The majority of local authorities have seen improvements in children and young people's health and wellbeing supported by ASF funded approaches.

Collaborative working

- There has been an increase in collaboration at local authority and school level to support equity. This has included collaboration across schools and local authorities as well as between education and other partners, including parents and the third sector.

- Strong partnerships with universities are helping to improve pedagogy as well as the use and analysis of data to measure the impact of initiatives and interventions.

Working with families and communities

- Schools are more consistently and effectively working with families on a range of issues that seek to mitigate the impact of poverty on family life and learning.

- Family workers, funded through the ASF, are a specific example of an initiative that has been **key** in developing increased engagement of parents and carers with children and young people's learning in over half of the local authorities.

- Working in partnership around family engagement initiatives is leading to improvements in parenting skills, parental ambition and employability.

3. There is demonstrable progress on a number of long-term measures to close the poverty-related attainment gap

Headteacher perspectives

- Headteachers are positive about the impact of the SAC in their school, have a clear understanding of what is working and are optimistic about improvements being embedded and continuing over the next five years.

Attainment measures

- Progress in closing the attainment gap has been made on a number of measures, although the level of such progress is varied depending on the measure under consideration. For the majority of measures, attainment of those from the most deprived areas has increased, although in some cases not at the same rate as those in least deprived areas.

- The greater rate of progress that can be seen at primary school level aligns with the pace at which the SAC was implemented, which initially focused support towards improvement activity within primary schools. The same rate of progress would, therefore, not be expected in secondary schools as a result of the SAC at this stage in the programme.

Wider Data

- A range of wider data sources may provide insight into the longer term benefits of the Challenge for young people. Across a range of data sources, an increasing proportion of young people from the most deprived areas are in education, employment or training; are in a positive initial and follow up destination after school and are attending Higher/Further Education. The gap between young people from the most and least deprived areas has narrowed across all these measures.

4. **The SAC and ASF are playing an important role in empowering schools and local authorities to deliver on closing the poverty-related attainment gap**

- One of the key features of the SAC is the flexibility and opportunity it offers to schools and local authorities to select, develop and create interventions that best work for children and young people in the local context. As a result, the SAC has seen a huge number of different interventions and approaches develop in different settings

- The autonomy and flexibility provided by PEF has enabled schools to tailor approaches to their specific needs.

- Evidence demonstrates that the Challenge Authorities have made significant progress towards achieving the medium-term outcomes of the programme as a result of the longer-term investment.
  (More detail on each Challenge Authority can be found in Appendix 2)

8.2 This remains a long-term endeavour

Reflecting on this progress to date provides an opportunity to consider further cross-cutting themes. These will be useful as we look to accelerate and deepen progress across all outcomes. Such themes include:

Building on the strengths of the SAC
The evolution of the Challenge and its associated investment saw the number of challenge authorities rise from seven to nine, whilst the schools programme and universal offer evolved, and support for care experienced children and young people and PEF were introduced. This gradual development saw the programme grow from a very targeted approach to closing the attainment gap to a system-wide improvement strategy to promote educational equity.

In looking ahead to continued efforts to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap, it is clear that there is progress to build on by focusing on the key areas of strength identified in the report.

Maintaining a holistic and integrated approach
The holistic approach of SAC has been a factor in embedding the culture and ethos of equity in the system, engendering a collective ownership of change. Supported by PEF, efforts to empower the system to make decisions closer to the classroom have created the conditions for decision-making more tailored to the needs of specific groups, families, children or young people. This has been generally welcomed by headteachers, highlighting the benefits of this system-wide approach to achieving equity in education.

There is evidence, however, that this autonomy has been particularly valued alongside co-ordinated local authority-wide approaches, highlighting the benefits of a blend of

both school-led and strategic local authority-led approaches to achieving equity in education.

A strength of the programme from the outset has been the commitment not to reduce the SAC to a narrow focus on attainment, whereby success is only measured against a narrow set of measures such as test scores. Rather the SAC has taken a broader, more holistic and integrated approach that has included a range of approaches to promote health and wellbeing and recognise the importance of wider achievement. This has seen LAs and schools implement a wide range of approaches that include activities such as the daily mile and a range of nurture programmes. In line with the aims of the CfE, that recognition of wider achievement alongside attainment is a strength to take forward in supporting children and young people to achieve their full potential.

The experiences of the pandemic have brought the importance of continuing and improving this holistic and integrated approach to tackling the poverty related attainment gap into sharper focus than ever. The nature of this holistic and integrated approach needs to be strategic, adaptive to emerging need, and accurately targeted to support those who need it most, whilst maintaining its long term vision of equity and excellence.

Consider targeting to accelerate recovery and progress
We have also learned that the intensity of approaches and levels of investment required to sustain improvements in settings with the highest concentrations of deprivation can be quite different to those required in other settings with lower levels of deprivation or with different challenges and barriers to learning.

Therefore, alongside considering the most impactful blend of authority-led strategic approaches and school-led local approaches, we can consider also more finely grained approaches focusing on school clusters or neighbourhoods within local authorities. An approach that relies on local knowledge of deprivation and its associated issues within specific local communities could allow for precise, targeted and co-ordinated interventions within Scotland's holistic and integrated approach, looking to support the collective impact of service provision across phases and sectors.

A renewed focus and a continued long term commitment
COVID-19 and the impact of school building closures has had a detrimental impact on the progress being made. This disruption to the system and to the lives of Scotland's children and young people reinforces the continued need to focus on equity and excellence, with the Equity Audit highlighting the need for a continued focus on health and wellbeing. A range of action is already underway in response to COVID-19 to support education recovery and help close the poverty-related attainment gap via the recruitment of additional teachers, provision of digital devices and connectivity, targeted youth work programmes, wider provision of free school meals and increased support for families to engage with learning at home.
In addition to these, in 2021/22 the Scottish Government has increased its investment in the SAC to over £200 million by introducing a one-year £20 million PEF COVID-19 Premium. This increases the investment in PEF from almost £128 million to almost £148 million and builds on the £750 million invested over the course of this Parliament and over £375 million in education recovery to date. This action

will ensure headteachers across 97% of schools will have further additional funding to support the children and young people who need it most.

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

This must remain a collective, system-wide endeavour that builds on the progress to date and one where the voices of children and young people are key to its continued development.

As children's rights become embedded in all aspects of society, there is increasing urgency and scope for the voices of our children and young people to influence the interventions that will improve their life chances.

The voices of children and young people are evident in a range of local approaches to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap, for example where one local authority implemented the Social Justice Ambassadors Programme, which used the voice of young people to tackle poverty related challenges in schools. The children and young people involved gave their views on a range of motions regarding community issues in their areas to lead staff from across the LA including Elected Members, third sector and Community Partnerships feeding into collaboration between young people and school staff to identify approaches to investing PEF.

We want to build on this. A children's rights approach has been embedded into the Scottish Government's response to COVID-19 and its approach to recovery and renewal and will be embedded in its continued efforts to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

In addition, the Government is convening an Advisory Group which includes some of the best minds in the system and will include education leaders and practitioners, third sector organisations and education and social justice experts to support the development of approaches to continue and build on progress beyond 2021/22.

Input from both the Advisory Group and children and young people, alongside the evidence in this report, the Equity Audit and consultation with a range of partners and stakeholders, including the ICEA, will be key to refining our approach going forward.

This refined approach developed in consultation with system experts, leaders, partners and children and young people will build on the strong foundations identified in this report and take forward a whole-system approach whilst further targeting approaches to accelerate recovery and progress and ensure all children and young people, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to succeed.

Appendix 1: Data sources

ASF Evaluation reports

The ASF evaluation began in 2015 and follows the duration of the SAC. An evaluation of the first two years of the ASF was published in March 2018, with the Year 3 (2017/18) evaluation published in June 2019. The Year 4 evaluation report was published in October 2020, while the Year 5 publication report will be published in March 2021. The evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the ASF and the extent to which the aims of the ASF have been met.

The evaluation has the following objectives:

- Assess the impact of the overall fund in improving attainment and health and wellbeing and reducing the difference between pupils from the most and least deprived areas
- Assess the extent to which the further aims of the ASF have been met: promote capacity for data-based self-evaluation and improvement, and encourage collaboration between schools and local authorities;
- Provide learning and increase the Scottish evidence base of what does and does not work to improve attainment and health and wellbeing, especially of pupils from the most deprived areas;
- Provide learning on what did and did not work well in the process of implementing the ASF across participating Challenge Authorities and schools and which factors helped and hindered the ASF achieving its outcomes.

Evidence in relation to the ASF aims has been gathered from a range of sources and evaluated against a set of research questions. These include:

- **Administrative data:** information gathered as part of the routine organisation of the ASF provides data primarily on the funding that local authorities and schools received from the different funding streams.
- **Challenge Authority and Schools Programme progress reports**: Challenge Authorities and Schools Programme Progress Reports in March and September each year.
- **Local Authority Survey:** all 32 local authorities are invited to take part in an online survey. The first wave took place in 2016 with Challenge Authorities only and subsequent waves have been undertaken with all local authorities. To note that the Local Authority Survey 2020 was impacted by COVID-19, with a final response rate of 15 authorities.
- **Headteacher Survey:** headteachers from a representative sample of schools are asked for their experiences of ASF, including the approaches that their school uses, the impact achieved, and the sustainability of the impacts and approaches. To note that the Headteacher Survey 2020 was impacted by COVID-19, with a final response rate of 27%.

Education Scotland 5 year professional review

Between October and December 2020, Attainment Advisors (AAs) worked alongside SAC local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence from their respective local authorities looking at the impacts of the SAC. The purpose was to provide qualitative and quantitative answers to three high level questions regarding the impact of SAC within each of the 32 local authorities:

1. How has the implementation of the SAC impacted upon the culture and systems of local authorities to ensure those cultures and systems are equitable for children, young people and families affected by poverty?
2. How has the SAC positively impacted upon, or contributed to, educational outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty?
3. Which lessons have been learned and what are the future priorities for the SAC?

Each Attainment Advisor completed a professional report which provided further detail and evidence around each of these three high level questions. They utilised data from a variety of different sources to triangulate the analysis. Some of these sources were more granular and specific to the individual local authorities (such as surveys and other data collections produced by those authorities), while others were more national in scope, such as Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) statistics or National Improvement Framework (NIF) data. Harmonised data collection reports focusing on some or all local authorities and compiled by Education Scotland were also used, these included inspection reports and Challenge Authority inspection reports. The reports compiled by AAs were then further analysed by Education Scotland and its partners to provide a national professional report detailing the impact of SAC over the past 5 years across Scotland.

Education Scotland Inspection of Challenge Authorities report

In September 2017, Education Scotland announced that HM Inspectors would establish a new programme of inspections. These were designed to evaluate and report on the progress being made in improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap by the nine local authorities designated as Challenge Authorities within the SAC.

HM Inspectors carried out the nine inspection visits between December 2017 and December 2018, with the report summarising this information published by Education Scotland in June 2019. During each inspection they met with local authority staff, including groups of headteachers, teachers and practitioners from early learning and childcare settings, primary, secondary and special schools. They also met with learners, parents, and other stakeholders. In addition, inspection teams observed practice in establishments and reviewed relevant documentation, with a particular focus on attainment outcomes for children and young people.

The inspection methodology included the issuing of questionnaires to allow HM Inspectors to gather the views of various stakeholder groups across a range of domains. The report itself contains a brief overview of the findings along with examples of best practice and high level descriptive statistics for the survey questions asked.

Appendix 2: Profiles of the 9 Challenge Authorities

Profiles of the 9 Challenge Authorities provided by Education Scotland Attainment Advisors

Summary of Progress – Clackmannanshire Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. Clackmannanshire was identified as one of five original Challenge authorities.

The education service in Clackmannanshire Council is led by the Strategic Director (People). The service is responsible for the education of over 6717 school-aged children and 766 within its nursery provision. There are 18 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, 1 special school and 2 support services: 1 primary and 1 secondary. There are also 3 stand-alone local authority nurseries. Over 29% of school pupils in Clackmannanshire live in areas of highest deprivation as categorised by The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2.

The authority has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£7,985,703), the Pupil Equity Fund (£6,292,187), the Innovation Fund (£29,850) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund £397,494), a total of (£14,705,234) over the period 2015 to 2020.

In the early years of SAC Clackmannanshire Council went through a period of significant political and strategic change. During the first year of the Attainment Challenge Clackmannanshire was part of a shared education service with Stirling Council. A new Clackmannanshire education service was established after this partnership ended in 2017. This early instability had a negative impact on the initial governance, focus, pace and direction of the education authority's work in relation to implementation of SAC. The newly established senior education team in Clackmannanshire revised the initial plans to better reflect the needs of Clackmannanshire Council and to support their vision for education. In 2020 a new Strategic Director (People) and a new Interim Chief Education Officer were appointed.

In December 2019 Education Scotland published the inspection of Local Authorities How well is Clackmannanshire Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? The authority was evaluated as making 'satisfactory' progress and the report identified the following key strengths:

- The strong leadership of the Chief Education Officer, supported by her senior leadership team, who share a clear vision of the action which needs to be taken.
- Education staff have been reinvigorated to make a positive difference for children and young people as part of the Clackmannanshire 'family'.
- Positive steps, including strong partnerships with universities, have been put in place to improve the use and analysis of data to measure the impact of SAC initiatives.

Aspects for development:

- Continue to develop and strengthen joint working with partner agencies which is leading to improvement.
- Ensure, as planned, implementation for the initiatives which are making the greatest difference to improving outcomes for learners.
- Continue to develop and improve the sustainability element and exit strategies for Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding initiatives and improve governance arrangements.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- A strong commitment to trauma informed practice evidenced by the investment, at all levels, in the Readiness for Learning (R4L) Programme. 1200 staff have received training and 2900 pupils have benefited from a range of R4L interventions. The programme has been influential in developing key principles and 'non-negotiables' which are now accepted as an entitlement for all learners across Clackmannanshire.
- A sustained focus on improving health and well-being has resulted in improved social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people accessing the wellbeing workers who have been employed in targeted schools.
- The intelligent use of a range of data is leading to increasingly more appropriate targeting of resources at local authority level.
- An effective tracking system developed by the data analyst and the one to one support provided by the data coach is helping headteachers to identify and address poverty related gaps.
- A strong emphasis on building the capacity of staff has resulted in improved practice. The Equitable Literacy Programme, for example, has improved approaches to reading across the authority. The Improving Outcomes Team have played a key role in supporting professional learning.
- The continuing commitment to supporting parents and families through initiatives such as Talk Clacks, FLIC 1400 and school family learning programmes are positively influencing families and their capacity to support children and young people in their learning.

Next steps include:

- It will be important that the recent more forensic targeting of SAC resources continues and is reflected at school level, particularly in relation to Pupil Equity Funding. This will ensure that all Attainment Scotland Funding is very clearly focused on improving outcomes for the children and young people impacted by poverty.
- There has been an increased coherence between the various workstreams involved in the local authority SAC plan which has worked well. It will be important to develop a similar coherence between the various strands of Attainment Scotland Funding (SAC, PEF and Care Experienced Funding) within Clackmannanshire. A common governance structure for all three

strands would help ensure all funded activities are very clearly focused, and result in, a closing of poverty related gaps across all sectors.

March 2021

Summary of Progress 2015-2020 – Dundee City Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. Dundee City Council joined the Challenge programme in year 1 (2015-16).

There are 24,000 school age children and young people in Dundee and 43.8% live in areas of highest deprivation as categorised by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. Data from 2020 indicates that 37% of people in Dundee live in the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland, only 65% of adults are in work, and life expectancy is the second lowest of any city in Scotland. There are 33 primary schools, 8 secondary schools, 1 special school and 1 off-site service for children with additional support needs. The Executive Director of Children and Families Services has overall responsibility for education, social work and community justice. There are two heads of service; the Chief Education Officer and the Chief Social Worker.

Dundee City Council has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£25,851,375), the Pupil Equity Fund (£20,060,277), and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (£871,506), a total of £46,783,158 between 2015 and 2020.

In 2015, Dundee City Council adopted an early intervention approach to achieve its vision for improving outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty. Eleven schools were initially targeted but this was quickly expanded to include all schools and sectors to ensure that equity is a priority for all. As a result of this expansion, there is a shared moral purpose and a collaborative ethos which underpins improvement.

The Education Scotland inspection report of February 2018, How well is Dundee City Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? stated that the authority was making good progress. The report stated that Education Scotland was confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- Strong leadership of the children and families service which has recently improved the pace of change through increased awareness of the need for improvement and appropriate support and challenge within the system to deliver change.
- Effective partnership working is providing a wide range of support for children and families and is leading to improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- A range of career-long professional learning opportunities is supporting practitioners to collaborate, to test out changes in their practice, to make better use of research and to develop further their knowledge and skills.
- Improved self-evaluation which is being supported by the recently developed framework, trios of schools working together and more intelligent use of data and improvement methodology.
- Very helpful advice to headteachers with regard to supporting them in their responsibilities with respect to PEF.

Aspects for development were noted as:

- Continue to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap across all sectors, building on valuable lessons learned in the early learning and childcare and primary sectors and in health and wellbeing. In so doing, continue to raise the attainment of all children and young people in literacy and numeracy.
- Review, based on evidence available, the number of initiatives that are being tested out and supported with a view to simplifying the landscape and gaining improved outcomes.
- Continue to develop exit or continuation strategies for SAC funded initiatives in order to embed practice and to build on children's progress.
- Further strengthen the information provided to the Children and Families Services Committee to enhance scrutiny and transparency through, for example, providing more information on the funding provided and used, and an increased focus on progress against planned activity.
- Building on the good start made, to develop further the role of school improvement partnerships, and using these as a mechanism to share good practice and collaboration of stakeholders across wider areas.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact, which identified the following key strengths:

- The strategic direction provided by senior leaders consistently promotes the vision of the attainment challenge and there is a strong commitment from staff at all levels to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty.
- High-quality professional learning for leadership is strengthening capacity and supporting sustainability. Professional learning and support for teachers and early years practitioners is developing skills in the use of data, action research and improvement approaches. This is increasing agency, confidence and skills to address equity in the classroom.
- More effective use of data is supporting authority officers, school leaders and practitioners to identify attainment gaps and evaluate progress at classroom, school and authority level.
- Intervention programmes in the early years are delivering intensive, targeted support which is improving acquisition of early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Literacy and numeracy attainment in P1, P4, P7 and S3 has increased over time. In primary, the poverty-related attainment gap has narrowed as a result of greater increases in the attainment of learners living in areas of highest deprivation.
- A range of early intervention approaches to support wellbeing is having a positive impact on vulnerable young people by reducing anxiety, improving attendance and increasing engagement in learning.
- Services created to assist in mitigating the impact of poverty on family life and on learning are providing effective support. For example, school and family development workers who are based in every primary school are playing a central role in strengthening relationships, improving parental engagement and facilitating family learning.
- The significant drop in exclusions since 2014, when rates were double the national average, to primary exclusions falling below national figures in 2018-19.

Next steps identified include:

- Embed systems leadership to enhance capacity at all levels, maximise progress and deliver the local authority's vision for a transformational pace of change.
- Build upon improvements in primary attainment and maximise attainment in the senior phase to ensure that young people affected by poverty achieve a breadth of skills, qualifications and achievements.
- Continue to strengthen quality improvement approaches and effective use of data by building on existing capacity and embedding consistent systems and practices across the authority.
- Utilise opportunities presented by entering the next phase of the attainment challenge to continue to review and streamline evidence gathering and evaluation across all SAC activity.

March 2021

Summary of Progress – East Ayrshire Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. East Ayrshire was initially identified in 2015 to be involved in the Schools Programme and became a Challenge Authority in June 2016.

Over one third of all children and young people in East Ayrshire live in areas of highest deprivation as categorised by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. This is above the national average. There are 7 secondary schools, 40 primary schools and 3 special schools. The education service in East Ayrshire Council is led by the Head of Education. The service is responsible for the education of over 16,000 school-aged children and over 3,000 children between the ages of 0 and 5.

The authority was allocated Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£14,434,854), the Pupil Equity Fund (£13,830,939), the Innovation Fund (£115,877) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (£723,629), a total of £29,105,299 over the period 2015 to 2020.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) leadership team was formed between May and September 2017. The East Ayrshire SAC programme is focused on three main workstreams: Literacy and Numeracy, Families and Communities and Leadership.

The Education Scotland inspection of local authorities (March 2019) How well is East Ayrshire Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? reported that the authority was making satisfactory progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report stated that Education Scotland were confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- The commitment of senior leaders to understand the needs of local communities.
- The recently refreshed leadership, which is providing greater clarity in the education service.
- Partnership working, which is helping to develop successful family and community work.

Aspects for development were noted as:

- Increase the pace of progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap and improve approaches to using data to support this.
- Approaches to sustainability should be more formally documented and shared with elected members to provide them with assurance that the most effective interventions provided through the Scottish Attainment Challenge are embedded within schools.
- Improve rates of attendance and continue to reduce exclusions, while also addressing the variations in these between schools.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- Through the clear commitment of senior leaders to understand the needs of local communities and supported by the work of the SAC leadership team there is an improved and shared understanding across the authority of the challenges faced by children, young people and families living in poverty. SAC funding has been a key driver for improvement across the local authority. Overall, the attainment of children and young people in East Ayrshire affected by poverty is beginning to improve.
- The approach to targeting SAC resources was improved by widening the data set used to identify pupils and schools. In doing so, the pace and reach of the programme was accelerated.
- Progression frameworks for literacy and English and numeracy and Mathematics were developed. In addition, the local authority has engaged well with the national quality assurance and moderation support officers (QAMSO) programme; good use of local expertise has linked this work to SAC priorities. As a result, there is now a strategic approach to planning for learning, teaching and assessment across the authority.
- The increased availability of high quality professional learning for all practitioners with an explicit focus on pedagogy, raising attainment and improving outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty. The growing culture of professional enquiry has contributed to the development of a 'leaders of learning' approach to share practice and build capacity across the workforce. This approach has the potential to be a sustainable model to further develop quality pedagogy and andragogy across the local authority.
- The professional learning networks established in the last two years to provide opportunities for learning and collaboration across all practitioners. These include those focused on self-evaluation, data training, Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) planning, School Improvement Planning (SIP) and Standards and Quality (S&Q) training. These professional learning networks have demonstrated early positive impact on school improvement. They are designed and delivered in consultation with a range of partners and all school leadership teams and are open to practitioners at all levels across the system.

Next steps identified include:

- Through analysis and scrutiny of attainment data and SIMD profiles there is scope for further targeted support and professional learning to interrupt the cycle of deprivation in schools where there are persistent gaps and low attainment.
- Action research/professional enquiry approaches within professional learning should be embedded authority wide. The data gathered from these approaches should continue to be used to inform professional learning requirements and to improve the design of targeted and universal support across the local authority.
- Continue to embed the Professional Learning Framework to further increase teacher agency, collaborative working and supporting the development of leadership skills across the local authority Further articulation of SAC, PEF and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding, including planning and evaluation, is required across the local authority to maximise impact.

March 2021

Summary of Progress – Glasgow City Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in February 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering excellence and equity in education. Glasgow City Council has been part of the SAC since 2015.

Education services in Glasgow City Council is led by the Executive Director. The service is responsible for the education of 80,000 children and young people across the education authority. There are 110 childcare settings, 123 partner providers and early learning and childcare settings, 140 primary schools, 30 secondary schools, and 25 special schools and services. Over half of children and young people live in areas of highest deprivation categorised as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2.

Glasgow City Council has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£40,497,213), the Pupil Equity Fund (£87,894,530), the Innovation Fund (£109,445) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (£5,371,032) over the period 2015 to 2020, a total of £133,872,220.

The Education Scotland inspection of local authorities (March 2019) How well is Glasgow Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? reported that the authority was making excellent progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report stated that Education Scotland were confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- The very strong council-wide vision focused on reducing the impact of poverty on
  children, families and communities.
- The relentless drive of the Executive Director in improving the educational outcomes of children and young people living in poverty in Glasgow.
- The exceptional progress made in reducing the impact of poverty on the educational attainment and achievement of children and young people.
- Outstanding approaches to career-long professional learning and leadership which have strengthened the skills and knowledge of staff and, as a result, improved children's and young people's attainment.
- In-built sustainability through capacity building is at the heart of the professional learning approaches undertaken across the city. Education Services have strongly promoted the importance of long-term sustainability across all aspects of their universal and targeted approaches to permanently reduce the impact of poverty on outcomes for children and young people.

Aspects for development were noted as:

- As planned, further refine the multi-layer self-evaluation approaches to continue to drive up standards.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- The very strong council-wide vision focused on reducing the impact of poverty on children, families and communities. The work of Glasgow's Improvement Challenge has remained a core priority across Education Services over the last five years and is promoted as 'core business' by the Executive Director. Staff at all levels work together to promote excellence, equity and empowerment across the city.

- The exceptional progress made in reducing the impact of poverty on the educational attainment and achievement of children and young people. In primary schools there remains an attainment gap between those living in SIMD 1 and 2 and those living in SIMD 9 and 10, however, it is closing. In primary schools, children from the most deprived areas continue to perform above the national average for all Broad General Education National Improvement Framework measures. At senior phase, outcomes for young people have shown a very positive upward trend over the last five years. Overall, young people are leaving school with better qualifications particularly at SCQF Level 6. Glasgow City Council is mitigating the impact of poverty very successfully for its young people at the senior phase across a number of measures.
- Outstanding approaches to career-long professional learning (CLPL) and leadership which have strengthened the skills and knowledge of staff and, as a result, improved children and young people's attainment. The CLPL programme developed for Challenge Leaders of Learning has received accreditation from the General Teaching Council of Scotland and has had measurable impact on staff knowledge, confidence and learner experience across the city.
- Education Services have strongly promoted the importance of long-term sustainability across all aspects of their universal and targeted approaches to permanently reduce the impact of poverty on outcomes for children and young people. The capacity building approach built within the Challenge Leader of Learning model ensures knowledge and skills are developed across staff teams and that leadership of learning is a responsibility of all teachers.

Next steps identified include:

- Continue to increase curriculum for excellence achievement levels at all stages through increased levels of rigour, effective use of data and improved professional dialogue.
- Continue to focus on assessment and moderation to increase and refine understanding of achieving a level in the broad general education to impact further on narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap.

March 2021

Summary of Progress - Inverclyde Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. Inverclyde Council joined the Challenge programme in year 1 (2015-16).

The education service in Inverclyde Council is led by the Director of Education, Communities and Corporate Development, supported by two heads of service. The service is responsible for the education of over 11,000 school-aged children and just over 1,100 children between the ages of zero to five. There are 20 early learning and childcare settings, 2 schools and centres for children and young people with additional support needs, 20 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. Over 48.8% of children and young people live in SIMD 1 and 2.

The authority has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£14,632,650), the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) (£9,668,837) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (£387,643), a total of £24,689,130 over the period 2015 to 2020.

Inverclyde has taken a strategic approach to raising attainment for all, while closing the poverty related attainment gap. Interventions in the local authority's Attainment Challenge Programme (ACP) were introduced with a 'start small and grow' approach. Initially 6 primary schools with the highest levels of children and young people living in areas of deprivation were identified to receive additional supports. This has grown to 12 over the life of the project with all 6 secondary schools joining the project in 2016/17. The authority's SAC improvement plan was developed in partnership with headteachers and other relevant stakeholders and is closely aligned with the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

The Education Scotland inspection of local authorities (October 2018) How well is Inverclyde Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? reported that the authority was making very good progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report stated that Education Scotland were confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- The very strong vision and shared values which are 'lived by all' across the authority.
- The influential leadership at all levels, from the Chief Executive, head of education through the central teams, and heads of establishments empowering staff to play their part in improving the life chances of children, young people and their families.
- Sector-leading evidence-based professional learning resulting in a culture of strong reflective and confident practitioners.
- Staff and partners working very effectively together to provide sensitive and well-judged support for children and young people, which is improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Robust self-evaluation, supported by strong strategic governance, at the heart of Inverclyde Council's practice

Aspects for development.

- Continue to secure high-level outcomes for all children and young people.
- Strengthen exit and continuation strategies for SAC initiatives.

In November 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- The leadership approach taken by Inverclyde in supporting the aims of the SAC and its implementation.
- Collaborative working across schools and between partners and schools is highly valued. This collaboration leads to improved outcomes for children. Highly effective professional learning has led to more skilled teaching. Through training and support in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved.
- The use of data is now an integral part of school improvement and the local authority continue to prioritise the development of data literacy. Processes for data analysis supports the review of the poverty related attainment gap and inform decisions in addressing this gap.
- Overall, there are improving trends in the attainment for children and young people in Inverclyde affected by poverty. Data shows improvement over time and the poverty related attainment gap is decreasing. Initial positive destinations for young people from areas of disadvantage in Inverclyde are improving and are above national levels. There are many factors which contribute to this including the work by staff funded by SAC across primary and secondary schools.

Next steps identified include:

- Strengthen reporting of outcomes of PEF spend to ensure the impact of the fund is maximised.
- Review care experience children and young people's fund plans to ensure improved educational outcomes for this group of children and young people.

March 2021

Summary of Progress – North Ayrshire Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched in February 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering excellence and equity in education. North Ayrshire Council has been part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge since 2015 and receives funding as a Challenge Authority, through the Pupil Equity Fund and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund. North Ayrshire Council has received £43,177,412 over the last 5 years across these funding streams.

The majority of children and young people in North Ayrshire live in the 30% most deprived areas of Scotland with over a third living in the 20% most deprived. North Ayrshire has the second highest proportion of children and young people affected by socio-economic disadvantage in Scotland.

The Education Scotland inspection of local authorities (July 2018) How well is North Ayrshire Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? reported that the authority was making very good progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report stated that HM Inspectors were confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- The central officer team's drive, vision and capacity for continuous improvement, supported by strong governance structures, provide opportunities for innovation
  within an appropriate framework of accountability at all levels
- There are shared values and common purpose where school staff feel valued and very well supported
- The very strong leadership of the Executive Director and leadership team is driving improved outcomes for children and young people
- Partnership working within Scottish Attainment Challenge thematic workstreams is leading to improved outcomes for children, young people and their families living in the highest areas of deprivation
- Very effective self-evaluation is leading to improved learning, raised attainment and a narrowing of the poverty-related attainment gap
- Very strong approaches to staff development are evident across the whole authority led by the work undertaken by the PLA. The development of leadership at all levels is building leadership capacity across the authority

Aspects for development were noted as:

- The authority should continue to build on identified areas of strong and sector leading practice
- The authority should continue to engage a wider range of stakeholders, including parents and pupils, in self-evaluation, planning and governance of the Scottish Attainment Challenge across North Ayrshire Council
- The authority should further strengthen the information provided to the cabinet to further enhance scrutiny and transparency

- The authority should confirm formal exit strategies for Scottish Attainment Challenge workstreams as a matter of priority and share them with elected members to ensure sustainability

In December 2020, Education Scotland link Attainment Advisors worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- The strategic leadership and governance approach taken by North Ayrshire Council has supported the Scottish Attainment Challenge vision and embedded practice across schools. A consistent approach has been adopted throughout the challenge with operational overview being provided by the head of service with senior managers leading specific workstreams. This approach has supported improvement, agility and sustainability
- Continued development of the sector-leading professional learning academy is providing a range of high quality professional learning activities to practitioners in every school in the authority. This professional learning is helping to raise attainment, particularly for those most affected by socio-economic disadvantage
- Innovation within the leadership workstream has resulted in improved leadership capacity across North Ayrshire and the development of a sustainable delivery model.
- Nurture provision is well established within North Ayrshire and is providing robustly assessed and effective support for many of the authority's most vulnerable learners
- The work of the family learning team continues to develop a range of valued support to an increasing number of families most affected by socio-economic disadvantage
- There are improving trends in the attainment of children and young people most affected by socio-economic disadvantage. In particular, young people living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage are achieving well in literacy and numeracy. The poverty related attainment gap has closed significantly for S3 learners

In line with national trends the attainment of children and young people in North Ayrshire who live in the 20% least deprived areas continues to be higher than those living in the 20% most deprived areas resulting in an enduring attainment gap. There are improvements in reducing the poverty related attainment gap and the authority is committed to making these improvements more consistent across all measures. Consequently, areas of development for the future include the following key points:

- Continuation of North Ayrshire's governance and implementation approach to support sustainability and prioritisation of initiatives. This may include building on existing approaches to renew the focus on identifying key gaps and objective evaluation of the impact of Scottish Attainment Challenge funded initiatives - including Care Experienced Children and Young People and Pupil Equity Funds - to ensure their impact on equity
- Continue to deliver progress against key National Improvement Framework and local measures of the poverty related attainment gap

- Continue to develop access to high quality learning and teaching including digital and remote learning approaches for every learner and particularly those affected by socio-economic disadvantage

March 2021

Summary of Progress – North Lanarkshire Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. North Lanarkshire Council joined the Challenge programme in 2015.

North Lanarkshire has the 4th largest population of local authority areas in Scotland with 26% of children living in poverty compared to a national average of 24% (End Child Poverty local data 2019). Over 25% of all children and young people in North Lanarkshire live in areas of highest deprivation, categorised as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), deciles 1 and 2. This is above the national average. There are 119 primary schools, 23 secondary schools, 23 council managed family learning centres and 13 special schools. There are approximately 54,000 children and young people.

The authority has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£34,360,724), the Pupil Equity Fund (£35,581,137), the Innovation Fund (£32,800) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fun (£1,187,071), a total of £71,161,732 over the period 2015 to 2020.

The Education Scotland inspection of local authorities (July 2018) How well is North Lanarkshire Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? reported that the authority was making good progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report stated that Education Scotland were confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- The clear vision and drive of the Assistant Chief Executive and her team, within North Lanarkshire's one council approach to delivery of services, leading to improvement in outcomes for children across the SAC and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) programmes.
- The increasing use of data and developing approaches to self-evaluation were providing more rigorous evidence to plan and review SAC and PEF interventions.
- Effective CLPL and strong support for families was resulting in improvement in aspects of attainment and closing of the poverty-related attainment gap.
- The work of the educational psychology service, within the SAC programme, was having a significant impact on improved outcomes for targeted groups of children and young people.

Aspects for development were noted as:

- Further develop the Continuous Improvement Service to maximise consistency of support and challenge for SAC and PEF.
- Build on the positive start made to closing the poverty-related attainment gap for children and young people as they progress through their learning.
- Strengthen the positive engagement of elected members in working for better outcomes for children and young people across North Lanarkshire Council by continuing to provide relevant information to the Education Committee on the

funding provided, and progress of Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- An increased understanding and use of attainment data to support decisions around identifying targeted groups and the measurement of targeted interventions.
- A new leadership framework, endorsed by Education Scotland, has been developed and includes leadership programmes for new or aspiring principal teachers, depute headteachers and headteachers. This approach aims to ensure long term sustainability and with less dependency on outsourcing.
- Approaches to empowerment, including 'family groups' and the recently developed 'Empowering Clusters' operating model, which are focussed on attainment and equity.
- Approaches to learning and teaching which have resulted in an overall improving trend in the attainment for children and young people in North Lanarkshire affected by poverty. The data shows improvement over time and the poverty related attainment gap shows a steady decrease.
- The positive impact of the community learning and development team on young people and adults from the most deprived communities.
- The Winter Leavers Pathways Programme was introduced in 2019-20 and supported 90 young people most at risk of disengaging from learning into a positive post-school destination.
- The work of the North Lanarkshire Psychological Service around health and wellbeing.
- The development of North Lanarkshire's Virtual School which provides additional educational support for care experienced children.

Next steps identified include:

- Building on the recent strategic realignment and refocussing of the SAC workstreams, continue to further develop integrative practice between services with a focus on increasing impact and sustainability including through PEF.
- A number of headteachers require support in developing a rationale for use of PEF, based on a clear contextual analysis which addresses attainment, attendance, exclusion, participation and engagement.
- At a strategic level, it is important that the various teams across the local authority work together to provide a coherent support for clusters and schools.
- Ensure long term sustainability via the leadership framework whereby experienced and effective practitioners from within North Lanarkshire continue to develop and deliver professional learning sessions, with less dependency on outsourcing.
- In order to optimise outcomes for care experienced children and young people, continue to develop the virtual school with particular focus on the partnerships between the virtual school and the young people's base schools.

- At a strategic level, continue to develop further guidance for school leaders to ensure consistently strong approaches to engaging with stakeholders.

March 2021

Summary of Progress – Renfrewshire Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. Renfrewshire Council joined the Challenge programme in year 2 (2016-17).

The education service in Renfrewshire Council is led by the Director of Children's Services. The service is responsible for the education of over 27,000 children and young people between 3-18. There are 35 early learning and childcare establishments, 49 primary schools, 11 secondary schools and 2 special schools. 25% of children and young people live in areas of the highest deprivation, as categorised by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2.

The authority has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£17,797,657), the Pupil Equity Fund (£17,228,108), the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (£1,426,000) and the Innovation Fund (£275,000) a total of £36,726,765 over the period 2015 to 2020.

Since 2015, the authority has been committed to delivering the recommendations from its Tackling Poverty Commission. Renfrewshire Council joined the programme in 2015 as a School's Programme Authority with five Challenge Schools. When the authority became a SAC Challenge Authority in June 2016, it was able to build on this foundation to develop its vision, values, and aims for SAC. The authority's SAC improvement plan was developed in partnership with headteachers and other relevant stakeholders and is closely aligned with the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

The Education Scotland inspection of local authorities (February 2019) How well is Renfrewshire Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? reported that the authority was making excellent progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report stated that Education Scotland were confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- Very strong self-evaluation, informed by high-quality data resulting in very successful, evidenced-based universal and targeted interventions, which are securing improvement.
- Highly effective leadership, shared vision and an ethos of empowerment of staff
  at all levels to improve outcomes for children and young people, their families and communities.
- The outstanding impact of very high quality professional learning approaches, developed and delivered in collaboration with partners.
- Renfrewshire Council's excellent approach to Scottish Attainment Challenge governance, which is set within a well-defined accountability framework.
- Significant year-on-year improvements in closing the poverty-related attainment gap across all key indicators in the broad general education across curricular areas.

Aspects for development were noted as:

- As planned, continue to build on successes achieved to date in addressing the poverty-related attainment gap and continue with plans to develop the sustainability of initiatives beyond the life of the SAC programme.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- Well-structured programme management ensuring clearly defined approaches.
- Partnership working to enhance impact including co-ordinated approaches in the sharing of data.
- A sector leading approach to professional learning including a highly effective leadership programme and a programme for classroom assistants.
- Evidence-based approaches to the teaching of literacy have led to delivery of a high-quality literacy curriculum.
- Very good moderation activities provided across the authority.
- Staff are skilled at recognising and addressing the impact of poverty on families.
- Attainment in literacy and numeracy in the broad general education has improved over time and the authority continues to perform above national averages with decreasing poverty-related attainment gaps across stages.
- Schools have been supported to deliver a Senior Phase which ensures appropriate pathways for young people and provides them with the opportunity to achieve a range of qualifications.
- There has been an increase in positive destinations for leavers from areas of highest deprivation.
- The views and voices of children and young people are shaping improvements across the authority.
- The roles of inclusion support assistants and transition teachers have supported improved attendance, reduction in exclusions and transitions among targeted groups.
- Almost all establishments in all sectors are fully engaged in Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach and there is a wide range of high-quality services and resources available to support the health and wellbeing of all children, young people and families.
- The work of the Support to Promote Attendance/Attainment for the Care Experienced (SPACE) team is effectively improving attendance and health and wellbeing for care experienced children and young people.
- The development of a parental engagement strategy has been a key focus to support establishments with their planning around parental engagement.
- The authority's approach to the use of data to inform all aspects of its work has led to the development of a positive data culture.
- Increased opportunities to work in partnership within, across and outwith the workstreams including with a range of academic partners have been impactful.

Next steps include:

- Establishing a 'Virtual School' approach towards supporting care experienced children and young people.
- Continuing to develop collective impact approaches.

- Continuing work to align systems and processes to ensure data accuracy through the ongoing data matching work.

March 2021

Summary of Progress - West Dunbartonshire Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. West Dunbartonshire Council joined the Challenge programme in year 1 (2015-16).

The education service in West Dunbartonshire Council is responsible for the education of around 12,000 school-aged children and young people in mainstream education establishments and 187 who are engaged in alternatives to mainstream education. There are 21 council managed early learning and childcare centres, 10 partner providers of early learning and childcare, 2 special schools, 33 primary schools, 1 programme for young people whose needs are not being met by mainstream secondary schools and 5 secondary schools. Just under half of all children and young people live in the areas of the highest deprivation categorised as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2, which is well above the national average.

West Dunbartonshire Council has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£10,597,759), the Pupil Equity Fund (£13,326,356), the Innovation Fund (£34,000) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (£869,360), a total of £24,827,475 over the period 2015 to 2020.

The Education Scotland inspection How well is West Dunbartonshire Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap? dated 1 May 2018 evaluated the authority as making very good progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. Particular strengths noted were:

- Highly-effective leadership of the education service resulting in a clear shared understanding of the local authority context and vision for improving the life chances for all children and young people.
- Staff and partners working effectively together to provide a wide range of support for children, young people and families which is leading to improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Many children, young people and families demonstrate a strong desire to positively engage in new projects and different ways of learning leading to increased achievements and skills for learning, life and work.
- Well thought-out strategic approaches to career long professional learning supporting practitioners to improve their practice through collaboration, engagement in research, critical reflection and skills development.
- Self-evaluation, underpinned by a robust governance framework, as an integral approach to continuous improvement.

Aspects for development were noted as:

- Continue to ensure self-evaluation provides clarity about which interventions add the most value to children's and young people's attainment and achievements and take steps to formalise exit or continuation strategies as appropriate.
- Further strengthen the information provided to the Educational Services Committee to enhance scrutiny by elected members through, for example, an increased focus on actual progress against planned activity.

- Building on the current good practice, improve planning with parents, carers and children and young people to ensure they are fully involved in discussions and decisions which affect their learning.
- Monitor the workload and impact on headteachers and central staff, including in human resources, procurement and finance, of their work related to the SAC and Pupil Equity Fund to ensure there is capacity to continue providing the required levels of administrative and other support.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- The authority strategy to deliver a system wide model of change and improvement, focussing on building capacity at all levels and in all sectors. This has improved the range of approaches being used to raise attainment and narrow poverty-related attainment gaps.
- An empowered system of school improvement at all levels has generated a self-sustaining model of school improvement with education leaders supporting and challenging peers and colleagues to raise attainment and improve learning.
- The conditions for effective collaboration and embedded use of data to improve outcomes have been created as a result of the foundations laid by the SAC work streams and projects.
- Since the 2018 Education Scotland inspection initiatives continue to maximise progress and embed sustainable change.
- A wider curriculum offering across establishments is in place with a focus on skills for learning and life enabling more young people to gain personal success and achievement.
- The scale and reach of nurture has been increased across all establishments and sectors, which has impacted on positive reductions in exclusion rates.
- Attainment of children and young people is showing trends of improvement with evidence of the narrowing of attainment gaps.
- Provision of SAC projects has increased the range and scope of accessible activities and services to support improvement in outcomes for families.
- The positive contribution played by the third sector family support and outreach workers is supporting children, young people and families with engagement, attendance, wellbeing and readiness to learn.

Next steps include:

- Continuing to prioritise quality of teaching and learning to raise attainment and continue to narrow the poverty-related attainment gaps.
- Advancing initiatives and projects to maximise attendance.
- Continuous development of personalisation and choice in the curriculum matched to future workforce demands.
- Continue to work with a range of multi-agency partners to identify interventions which focus on addressing identified needs of care experienced children and young people.
- Build on local community approach to providing integrated services for children, young people and families.

March 2021

MAKING SCOTLAND the *best place* to GROW and LEARN

A long-term commitment

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.

SHARED VISION and PRIORITIES in the National Improvement Framework

- Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)
- Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)

COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOUR system-wide

A vision of EQUITY

CLOSING THE POVERTY-RELATED ATTAINMENT GAP

Scottish ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE

FOCUS ON CLOSING THE POVERTY-RELATED ATTAINMENT GAP

750m ATTAINMENT Scotland Fund (ASF)

ADDITIONAL targeted support and approaches TO EDUCATION

Attainment ADVISORS

focus on

Support for all 32 LOCAL authorities

EQUITY DRIVERS

- Leadership
- Families and communities
- Learning and teaching

Local delivery of NATIONAL PRIORITIES

INTERVENTIONS *include:*

LITERACY

* literacy leaders and champions
* metacognitive work
* 1:1 and group support
* commercial resources

HEALTH & WELLBEING

*nurture *transition
*outdoor learning
* breakfast and afterschool clubs
*music, dance, mindfulness

NUMERACY

* numeracy leaders and champions
* problem solving *cooperative learning
* new tools and approaches
* linking numeracy to wider STEM

where the FUNDING goes

CHALLENGE AUTHORITIES AND SCHOOLS PROGRAMMES

FOR AUTHORITIES AND SCHOOLS (9 authorities & 73 individual primary and secondary schools) most affected by poverty

ATTAINMENT Scotland FUND

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING (PEF)

Over 97% of schools, across Scotland

CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FUNDING

ACHIEVING EQUITY: Ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

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Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE
LITERACY NUMERACY HEALTH & WELLBEING

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Renfrewshire Council

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Education Establishments**

1. Summary

1.1. In line with the Children's Services priority to reduce inequalities and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people, this digital policy has been developed, by a multi-agency team, for use in education establishments across Renfrewshire.

1.2. The purpose of the digital policy is to support the work establishments are doing around mental health and wellbeing. It will ensure that all education staff working with children and young people in Renfrewshire are provided with the necessary information and self-evaluation framework to plan for improvement while also identifying the effective practice already in place.

1.3. The policy provides a template for establishments to contextualise to suit their own settings. It outlines universal and targeted approaches to support the mental health of children and young people as well as signposting young people, staff and parents to sources of support. Training opportunities for staff are also highlighted.

1.4. The policy provides a framework to support effective mental health in establishments through the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde 6 box model. This includes self-evaluation of practice under 6 headings: one good adult; developing resilience in establishments; peer support and social media; guidance through the service maze; responding to distress; and developing resilience in communities.

1.5. The policy is underpinned by GIRFEC and is linked to the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles 3,12,13,17, 24 and 29.

1.6. The digital nature of the policy ensures that live links can contain the most up to date information on an ongoing basis. There are 2 versions; one for secondary schools and the other for primary/early years.

1.7. Implementation of the policy across Renfrewshire establishments will be monitored by the Mental Health Action Group, chaired by the education Health and Wellbeing Development Officer. By June 2022, it is expected that all education establishments will be effectively implementing their own mental health and wellbeing policy.

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2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that the Education and Children's Services Policy Board note the content of the 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Education Establishments' as a helpful digital policy document to support consistency and high quality practice across Renfrewshire education establishments.

Click here for link to the digital policy template

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3. Background

3.1 The Scottish Government and COSLA have demonstrated their shared commitment to improving the mental health of children, young people and their families by working with delivery partners to invest in preventative services. The recommendations and actions from the Better Mental Health in Scotland (2018), Audit Scotland Report (2018) and Mental Health Strategy 2017-27 highlight the significant need to provide opportunities for early intervention and prevention to avoid the unnecessary escalation of emotional distress in children and young people.

3.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the way of life of every single person in Scotland. We know that the mental health impact of Covid-19 will not have been felt equally across Scotland. We also know that some of the mental health impacts of the pandemic will take time to materialise. As we start to recover from the pandemic, it is particularly important that there continues to be a focus on promoting good mental health and wellbeing and that support is provided whenever it is needed.

3.3 The Scottish Government publication Mental Health – Scotland's Transition and Recovery summary/ October 2020 cites some key themes from initial findings of the Research Advisory Group into the impact of Covid-19. These include elevated rates of stress or anxiety, loneliness and the effects of economic pressures on families. Rates of traumatic reactions are expected to increase; including substance misuse, domestic violence, self-harm and suicide.

3.4 It is vital that there is a consistent high quality approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing across all education establishments underpinned by a clear and effective policy.

Implications of this report

1. Financial
None.

2. HR and Organisational Development
None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is well	-	Promotes wellbeing and resilience in children and young people.
Our Renfrewshire is fair	-	Aims to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to access appropriate support from skilled adults.
Our Renfrewshire is safe	-	Aims to protect vulnerable children and young people and reduce the risk of harm.
Building strong, safe and resilient communities	-	Promotes effective support for vulnerable children and young people.
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	-	Aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people.
Working together to improve outcomes	-	Provides professional learning opportunities for staff to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people within Renfrewshire

4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers

Click here for link to the digital policy template 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Education Establishments'.

Other background papers are contained as live links within the Board Report.

The foregoing background paper will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Julie Calder, Head of Service, email: julie.calder@renfrewshire.gov.uk 0141 6187194

Children's Services
JC 13/04/21

Author: Mairi Thomas, Education Manager, mairi.thomas@renfrewshire.gov.uk, 0141 618 3994

Renfrewshire Council

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **SQA Alternative Certification Model**

1. Summary

1.1 On 7 October 2020, it was announced that the planned diet of SQA National 5 examinations for session 2021-21 would be cancelled. This was followed by a second announcement on 9 December 2020 that the planned diet of SQA Higher and Advanced Higher examinations for session 2021-21 were also to be cancelled.

1.2 The key difference to the traditional certification model is that now schools have been asked to take the lead on determining provisional grades based on assessment evidence. This has never happened before.

The SQA have stated that a provisional grade should be 'a holistic review of a candidate's performance as indicated by assessment evidence'; unlike the 2020 estimate it should be an evidence-based prediction of final attainment and does not include an inferred element. SQA have provided guidance in relation to this.

1.3 On 16 February 2021 the National Qualification 2021 Group published the revised alternative certificate model (ACM) for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

1.4 Schools are working closely with the central team to ensure the successful implementation of the Alternative Certification Model, making sure that the hard work of all our young people is rightly and fairly recognised.

1.5 Pupil awards will be based solely on their demonstrated attainment subject to:

- Internal centre-level moderation.
- Subject-level moderation, either through Local Authority or Regional Improvement Collaborative networks.
- Review of summary data by centre Senior Leaders.
- Review of summary data by the Central Education team

2. Recommendations

2.1 Elected members are asked to note and consider the arrangements for and progress of the implementation the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) in Renfrewshire as part of the 2021 certification process.

3. Background

3.1 In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government took the decision that there would be no examination diet in 2020. Subsequently the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) set out arrangements for an alternative certification model.

3.2 Following the release of results on 4 August 2020 the focus nationally was on whether the certification model was equitable to all candidates. Professor Mark Priestley was commissioned by the Scottish Government to lead an independent review of the processes through which qualifications were awarded.

3.3 In October 2020, following the publication of the Priestley Review and in light of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Deputy First Minister announced the suspension of the National 5 examinations diet. An Alternative Certification Model for National 5 qualifications was outlined based on teacher and lecturer judgements supported by assessment resources and quality assurance.

3.4 The Deputy First Minister made further changes on 8 December 2020 indicating that there would be no external assessments of Higher or Advanced Higher courses. As a result, the entire 2021 National Qualifications examination diet had been cancelled and replaced by the ACM.

3.5 The National Qualifications 2021 Group was set up to support the development of the ACM nationally, it includes representatives from a range of key stakeholders including Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the National Parent Forum of Scotland, SQA and Schools Leaders Scotland (SLS).

3.6 Locally, officers have been liaising with local authority colleagues across Scotland via ADES and have been supported by our SQA Liaison Manager.

4. Implementation of Alternative Certification Model

4.1 As noted in paragraph 3.5, the National Qualifications 2021 Group is overseeing the national development of the ACM. The agreed model has

recently been revised to reflect the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and is based on five key stages, these are summarised below:

Stage 1: ongoing until April 2021 – Teachers and lecturers access subject specific guidance, assessment resources and Understanding Standards materials and webinars from SQA.

Stage 2: April to May 2021 – School, college, training provider and local authority quality assurance continues. During May, SQA requests, reviews and provides feedback on assessment evidence from each school, college and training provider.

Stage 3: end May to 25 June 2021 – Schools, colleges, training providers, local authorities and SQA work through final stages of local and national quality assurance and feedback, to reach provisional results that are consistent, equitable and fair.

Stage 4: by 25 June 2021 – Schools, colleges and training providers submit quality assured provisional results to SQA.

Stage 5: Appeals process for 2020–21 – To be advised following consultation.

4.2 The SQA published additional guidance on the implementation of the Alternative Certification Model in February 2021. This guidance formed the basis of our own local guidance.

4.3 Our focus is on ensuring that pupils get the results that they deserve through a robust fair and transparent process. To ensure this we have developed additional advice for staff (Appendix 1) on the appropriate implementation of the ACM, which is designed to build confidence in the system and the judgements being made through a robust inter-authority quality assurance process which ensures grades are subject to rigorous checks.

4.4 Internal verification guidance, closely aligned with SQA policy, has been developed with senior school staff (Appendix 2). It sets out best practice for the creation and validation of assessment and how schools will undertake moderation to ensure a shared understanding of standards and expectations. The policy has also been peer reviewed by another Local Authority.

4.5 Schools are working together to implement the ACM. Moderation teams have been set up through subject networks, with schools working in pairs or trios to validate assessments and moderate candidate evidence. Time has been dedicated to subject leads to carry out validation of assessments. In addition, subject teachers across Renfrewshire are supporting the quality assurance model to reinforce assessment standards.

4.6 HM Inspectors of Education are carrying out a national review of local authority approaches to quality assurance as part of the Alternative Certification Model. This review will take place between 12 April and 30 April 2021 to enable a national report to be published in mid-May 2021.

4.7 On the 16th February, the First Minister announced that an additional two days will be set aside for teachers to engage with the assessment, moderation and quality assurance process required for awarding National Qualifications during this year. These two days are additional in-service days specifically for assessment, moderation and quality assurance purposes, and are therefore termed 'assessment support days'. Further to consultation with schools and Unions, it has been agreed that in Renfrewshire, these will take place on the Tuesday 1st and Monday 7th June.

4.8 During May and June, the central education staff will support schools in the ongoing review of provisional grades.

4.9 During May SQA will request, review and provide feedback on a sample of assessment evidence from each school across Scotland as part of the national quality assurance.

4.10 Unlike 2020, provisional results will be shared with learners before being submitted to the SQA. The provisional results will still be subject to further administrative checks by SQA, who will then issue the final results individually to learners on 10 August 2021.

4.11 Stage 5 of the ACM is the appeals process, which is still to be finalised following national consultation.

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5. Conclusion and next steps

5.1 The implementation of the ACM poses significant challenges for Local Authority Education staff not just in Renfrewshire but across Scotland. We have put various steps in place to ensure that the delivery of the ACM is robust, fair and transparent. As a result of these measures we can be confident that young people will get the grades that they deserve, and that their hard work and dedication to their learning will be fairly rewarded.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

There are no financial and efficiency implications associated with the amended certification process for 2021. The 2021 arrangements will be covered by the agreed SQA budget.

2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is fair	·	The delivery of the ACM aims to ensure that

Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	-	The delivery of ACM aims to ensure that all young people in the Senior Phase have the opportunity to achieve success
Working together to improve outcomes	-	Education staff will work together to ensure that the process is robust fair and transparent.

4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers

NA

Children's Services
JC 13/04/21

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Appendix 1

ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL

February 2021

Roles and Responsibilities

Renfrewshire Council

Introduction

The following document sets out each of our roles and responsibilities to deliver the SQA's Alternative Certification Model (ACM).

Collaboration will be critical to the successful delivery of the ACM, therefore as well as the SQA expectations, we have set out additional Renfrewshire-specific actions to ensure that we have robust procedures in place to provide a valid and reliable assessment process for our young people.

Also included within the document is a template for middle leaders to be populated and used as appropriate to your own school context.

SQA

January- April	May	June
Stage 1	**Stage 2**	
January/February 2021 — For Higher and Advanced Higher: o produce subject-specific guidance clarifying assessment requirements o publish and promote subject-specific assessment resources for centres to use January–April 2021 for all levels: o provide Understanding Standards resources and activities o provide direct advice and support to centres, on request, where queries have not been addressed in guidance	During May, issue selections to centres Receive assessment evidence from centres for the subjects/levels selected Externally quality assure marked learners' assessment evidence from every centre, to ensure that marking is to the national standard Provide subject-specific feedback for National Courses to centres (and the local authority, where appropriate) on the extent to which assessment approaches were valid and marking was reliable and to the national standard, and provide advice on any adjustments that need to be made. Obtain a declaration from the head of centre that the feedback from SQA has been acted on within the centre Collate any common issues from national quality assurance for each National Course and publish this to inform all centres Issue further information on how to submit the provisional results	
	Stage 3	
	Encourage use of existing published training materials for centres and local authorities on how best to check results during local quality assurance of provisional results, while ensuring that these are firmly based on current candidate evidence	

Central Team

January to April		May		June
Stage 1		**Stage 2**		
SQA expectation	***Additional actions for central team***	**SQA expectation**	**Additional actions**	
Support/facilitate: - Understanding Standards - centre-level assessment approaches - centre-level quality assurance - local authority/area-based subject quality assurance - access to local SQA appointees to support identified subject areas	• Request confirmation that all staff delivering NQ courses have engaged with US materials. • Discuss guiding principles for assessment with HTs and request confirmation of approach to assessment. (Discussion with JC) • Request confirmation that QA aligns with Renfrewshire Internal verification policy • Establish subject specific moderation teams	Consider capacity to support the national QA exercise by releasing a limited number of appointees to undertake this work if required.	Release appointees as appropriate	
		Stage 3		
		SQA expectation	**Additional actions**	
		Support/facilitate: o centre-level quality assurance o local authority based subject quality assurance, perhaps through subject networks Develop and implement processes for the checking stage, building on processes implemented in 2020. This should include: o the processes implemented by the school/centre o the outcome of the checking exercise o the rationale for any variances Engage with schools to consider data by subject. Internal checking processes provide a rationale for the centre's assessment judgements and may lead to a review of candidate evidence, if required, using local subject expertise.	• PT meetings will continue; purpose will continue to be to provide the platform to validate assessment and moderate evidence. • Release staff to participate in moderation • Subject specific moderation teams will be deployed to support schools/subject areas where additional supports are requested and to support sense checking. This will be on-going as teachers gather evidence that will inform provisional grades	

School

January to April		May		June
Stage 1		Stage 2		
SQA expectation	***Additional actions***	**SQA expectation**	**Additional actions**	

Support teachers in their roles and responsibilities
 	
Ensure that teaching staff are aware of, and using, SQA guidance on assessment and producing provisional results
 	
Ensure that the centre's quality assurance procedures are being defined and made available to staff
	• Ensure all staff have engaged with the SQA's alternative certification model documentation including Understanding Standards activity.
	• **Share with staff teams guiding principles of assessment:**
	  • Each school has the responsibility for determining their approach to assessment and timetable for assessing their young people. It is recognised that this will vary across schools and be dependent on the times which best fit around learning and teaching that has taken place. However, schools may choose to consider some of or all of the following key points:
	  o When determining two to four pieces of evidence, this does not mean two to four full 'practice' or 'prelim exams' which would normally mirror a traditional final paper.
	  o Assessment pieces will be spaced out, if possible, to allow young people to get feedback to further support their learning for subsequent pieces of evidence. For example, a piece of evidence gathering may take place in early May with a further 2 pieces closer together towards the end of the time frame available.
	  o Tailoring assessment pieces to the needs individual schools and its young people, taking into consideration depth of learning and appropriate course coverage. While it is accepted that SQA support materials will help significantly in this process, nevertheless careful consideration should be given around using these in full as the only evidence base.
	  o Final provisional grades must only be determined through demonstrated attainment. Inferred attainment must not be used.
	• Provide clarity to young people on what pieces of evidence will inform their provisional grade for each subject; the weighting of each piece of evidence; and the timeline for assessment.
	• Agree on school approach to assessment (this could include subject specific variances.)
	• Share with staff teams the Renfrewshire SQA internal verification policy or school equivalent.
	• Confirm with central team that:
	  o All staff delivering NQ courses have engaged with understanding standards activity
	  o Approach to assessment is in line with guiding principles above and that this has been discussed and agreed at school level.
		Continue to support teachers in their roles and responsibilities in relation to assessment and centre quality assurance
		
		Support and facilitate teaching staff awareness and use of SQA guidance on assessment and producing provisional results
		
		Support and facilitate the consistent application of centre's QA procedures
		
		Support teachers in their roles and responsibilities within the national QA process
		
		Support and facilitate teaching staff to act on any feedback received from SQA's QA, to ensure that marking is consistent with national standard
		
		Act on feedback received from SQA's quality assurance process to consider the effectiveness of
			• Ensure that quality assurance of each stage of the assessment process, as per the Internal verification policy to ensure a robust mechanism to help support final provisional grades.
			• Use estimate tool to sense check assessment information and inform the central team asap if additional moderation is required.	

	o All assessment tools have been validated as per internal verification policy.	the centre's quality assurance process and any adjustments required provide a declaration from the head of centre that the feedback from SQA's quality assurance has been acted on within the centre Carry out checks that results are consistent with evidence, to inform any initial discussions within the centre		

Stage 3	
SQA expectation	**Additional actions**
Carry out centre quality assurance on provisional results, prior to submission to SQA, including checking that provisional results are based on current learner evidence. Engage in any further local quality assurance on provisional results with the local authority, Local quality assurance could also include dialogue with SQA where the centre requests further support Make any adjustments to provisional results and/or processes required as a result of centre, local and/or national quality assurance. Any adjustments would be made on the basis of current candidate evidence	• Continue to use estimate tool to sense check assessment information and work with the central team if additional moderation is required • Submit provisional grades to local authority by 15th June. This can be in or around this date.

Middle Leaders

January - March		May		June
Stage 1: Package of support for centres on assessment of N5, H and AH in 2020-21		**Stage 2: May**		
Expectation	***Additional actions***	**Expectation**		
Support teachers in their roles and responsibilities Ensure that teaching staff are aware of, and using, SQA guidance on assessment and producing provisional results Ensure that the centre's quality assurance procedures are being defined and made available to staff	• *Ensure all staff in department delivering NQ courses have engaged with the SQA's alternative certification model documentation….* • *Share with staff in department guiding principles of assessment:* o When determining two to four pieces of evidence, this does not mean two to four full 'practice' or 'prelim exams' which would normally mirror a traditional final paper. o Assessment pieces will be spaced out, if possible, to allow young people to get feedback to further support their learning for subsequent pieces of evidence. For example, a piece of evidence gathering may take place in early May with a further 2 pieces closer together towards the end of the time frame available. o Tailoring assessment pieces to the needs individual schools and its young people, taking into consideration depth of learning and appropriate course coverage. While it is accepted that SQA support materials will help significantly in this process, nevertheless careful consideration should be given around using these in full as the only evidence base. o Final provisional grades must only be determined through demonstrated attainment. Inferred attainment must not be used. • • Provide clarity to young people on what pieces of evidence will inform their provisional grade; the weighting of each piece of evidence; and the timeline for assessment. • *Ensure that all assessment tools are validated by at least one other school. PT meetings should be used to support this.*	Continue to support your team in their roles and responsibilities in relation to assessment and centre quality assurance Support and facilitate awareness and use of SQA guidance on assessment and producing provisional results Support and facilitate the consistent application of the school's QA procedures Act on feedback received from SQA's quality assurance process to consider the effectiveness of the department/Faculty quality assurance process and any adjustments required Carry out checks that results are consistent with evidence, to inform any initial discussions within the department/faculty	• Inform SLT that you have acted on advice of SQA • *Use estimate tools to sense check and work with SLT if additional moderation is required.*	

	Stage 3: May and June	
	Expectation	**Additional actions**
	Carry out centre quality assurance on provisional results, prior to submission to SLT including checking that provisional results are based on current learner evidence. Engage in any further local quality assurance on provisional results with the local authority, Make any adjustments to provisional results and/or processes required as a result of department/faculty/ local and/or national quality assurance. Any adjustments would be made on the basis of current candidate evidence.	Submit provision grades to SLT by.

Appendix 2

Renfrewshire Internal Verification Guidance December 2020

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Purpose of document

This document is intended to offer support to centres in ensuring robust approaches to internal verification and compliance with SQA expectation.
Internal verification is a crucial element of quality assurance. It ensures that all candidates entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently to the specified national standard. A robust verification system across the school ensures the validity and reliability of assessment.

An effective interval verification system will ensure that:

- Assessments are robust, valid, reliable, practicable and equitable
- Assessments are conducted appropriately and candidates are given the opportunity to show they have met the national standards
- Assessments are appropriate for learners at all levels whilst while maintaining and supporting national standards of assessment
- Assessment decisions are reliable and consistent across a specific qualification
- Assessments are being regularly reviewed and agreed marking criteria are being adhered to and uniformly applied by all assessors

Effective internal verification also brings additional benefits to centres. These include:

- facilitating collaborative working between assessors and internal verifiers therefore ensuring that standards are met across all presenting centres
- allowing quality concerns to be Identified, addressed and rectified in a timely manner
- checking that record-keeping and resulting of candidates is accurate
- supporting preparation for successful external verification
- helping to protect assessors from appeals/challenges of their professional assessment judgements

Effective internal verification is an ongoing process. It allows good practice to be shared and can help identify problems at an early stage. Leaving internal verification until too late in the assessment process is not good practice and can jeopardise candidates' chances of success because there may not be sufficient time to carry out remediation or re-assessment.

Models of internal verification

There are many different ways of operating effective internal verification processes. In choosing approaches, centres should ensure that these meet the requirements as set out by SQA in the course specification documentation.

Centres should choose a model for the allocation and deployment of internal verifiers that works in their situation and meets SQA's requirements.
Approaches may include:

- Allocating responsibility to named staff for carrying out internal verification for particular units/awards. This has the advantage of giving the designated internal verifiers a view of all assessments relating to the units/awards they are responsible for quality assuring.
- Allocating responsibility to named staff for carrying out internal verification relating to particular assessors. This is particularly appropriate where the units/awards require a high degree of performance evidence, as is the case with many regulated qualifications.
- All staff members taking responsibility for both assessing and internally verifying units. This has the advantage of promoting in-depth understanding of the unit/award requirements and facilitating standardisation.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all internal verifiers are competent in their role and that they understand and apply the internal quality assurance system consistently. There must be an effective selection and induction process for internal verifiers. Any training or development needs for internal verifiers should be identified and met.

It should be noted that under no circumstances should an internal verifier be verifying assessments which they have developed or verifying their own assessment judgements.

Tools of internal verification: standardisation and sampling

Standardisation
The internal verifier should arrange standardisation exercises to support all assessors in their judgement of candidate evidence. These activities allow any subjectivity and/or discrepancies between assessors' judgements to be identified and allow adjustments to remedy these. They also allow the internal verifier to disseminate good practice.
There are different ways of carrying out standardisation, for example by observation, product evaluation, written/oral questions or a combination of these methods.

Standardisation exercises
Each of these standardisation exercises encourages co-operative working and fosters professional development. They also lead to a shared understanding of national standards, thereby ensuring fair, accurate and consistent assessment judgements. There are benefits for any assessor in checking their judgement, particularly for new qualifications and awards. Teaming a new assessor with an experienced assessor is also an ideal way to provide support for a new assessor.

Agreement trial: appropriate for product evidence. Assessors consider examples of candidate work, together with the assessment scheme. Any discrepancies or differences in judgement should be discussed to reach a shared understanding.

Blind marking: appropriate for written evidence and aims to reduce any bias by an assessor, however unintentional. There are two ways to carry out blind marking. In one form, the evidence is anonymous as the candidate's details are removed. In the other, more commonly used form, two or more assessors mark the same evidence but are unaware of the mark awarded by the other. Any discrepancies in marks, or application of the marking scheme, should be discussed to reach a shared understanding.

Cross assessment: assessors exchange candidate evidence to review, discuss and agree on the interpretation of the standard. The assessors may have used a different assessment or followed different procedures, but they should be judging candidate evidence against a common standard. Cross assessment can be particularly useful for centres with alternative or satellite centres, or who have a partnership arrangement for qualification delivery.

Double marking: This is similar to blind marking as it is normally used with written evidence. In this exercise, assessors exchange the same candidate evidence to check each interpretation of the marking scheme and apply a common standard. It can be particularly useful to discuss any borderline decisions.

Dual assessment: also known as peer assessment, two assessors assess the same candidate. This type of standardisation is particularly appropriate for performance, practical activities and process skills. Each assessor should make an independent initial judgement, discuss any discrepancies and reach a consensus judgement.

Evidence review: the internal verifier collates a range of candidate evidence and asks a group of assessors to discuss any discrepancies between their individual judgements. This allows professional development as well as ensuring a shared understanding. It can be particularly useful for any new qualifications or awards.

Sampling

It is good practice to develop a sampling strategy that allows the internal verifier to check that each assessor is making consistent assessment judgments, in line with the standard, for each group of candidates over time.

During the assessment process, the internal verifier should select a sample of candidate evidence to check that each assessor is making consistent decisions in line with national standards. This allows the internal verifier to review assessment judgements and identify any inconsistencies at an early stage. The internal verifier can then ensure that action is taken to address these issues. This may involve expanding the sample or sampling the work of these assessors again later in the delivery of the qualification. It is important that this should be a supportive activity that ensures confidence in the assessment process and provides professional development.

A range of assessment methods should be included in the sample, and the number of candidates sampled should be proportionate to the total number of candidate entries for that qualification in your centre, including any candidates at alternative or satellite sites. You may choose to use a defined number, defined percentage, or the square root of the total number of candidates taking that assessment. However, for a new qualification or one new to your centre, a higher level of sampling would be expected to reduce any quality assurance risks. The internal verifier should therefore sample assessments from every candidate group assessed by every assessor. This should include any instances of remediation, where the assessor has required the candidate to supply additional evidence because of a minor shortfall or omission. Such instances must be formally noted by the assessor.

The following factors should be considered in selecting the sample:

- new assessors — either new members of staff or new to the qualification
- a new qualification, or one new to your centre
- any changes to the unit or assessment since the last delivery
- any issues previously identified by internal or external verification
- a proportionate approach to sampling candidate evidence
- different methods of assessment used with different candidate groups
- different modes of delivery (full/part-time, online, partnership arrangements)
- coverage over time to ensure that all assessments within a qualification are internally verified
- candidates in alternative or satellite assessment sites

Like standardisation, sampling should take place at different points throughout the delivery of the qualification, and not be left until assessment has been completed. This allows the internal verifier to address any concerns before external verification and the submission of candidate results, by expanding the sample or sampling again later at a later stage.

It is important that sampling is ‘fit for purpose’. If the qualification is highly knowledge based, the records of that knowledge evidence and the associated assessment judgements should be sampled as part of the verification process.

If the qualification involves performance or practical activities, sampling should include not only evidence such as candidate logs and assessor observation reports, but also methods to gauge how the assessment judgments were made, such as the participation of the internal verifier in dual assessment exercises.

It is best practice to document your sampling strategy together with records of sampling activity. Such records should include the date at which sampling activity took place.

Functions of internal verification

Internal verification is divided into three stages — before, during and after the assessment process. The internal verifier or verifier team is responsible for ensuring that internal assessments are valid, practicable, equitable and fair and that the assessors' judgements are reliable so they must be involved in each stage. This responsibility involves:

- supporting assessors
- checking assessments to ensure validity, practicability, equity and fairness
- ensuring reliability
- maintaining assessment and verification records
- reviewing internal verification

Before assessment: supporting assessors

Internal verifiers should ensure that assessors are familiar with the qualification standards and that their assessments are valid, practicable, equitable and fair. There should also be an appropriate scheme to judge the candidate's evidence. This check should take place **before** candidates take the assessment.
Support for assessors should also take place throughout the course of the qualification — it should not be left to the point of assessment for certification. This could involve internal verifiers observing assessment practice and providing constructive feedback to the assessors.
Internal verifiers should have a developmental role for less experienced assessors by offering advice and guidance. This means that an internal verifier needs to have assessment expertise and knowledge of different assessment methods.
There are three essential forms of assessment: observation, product evaluation, and questioning. An assessment may involve a combination of some or all three. All assessment methods, such as a project or performance, can be classified under one or more of these forms.

Before assessment: checking assessments for validity, practicability, equity and fairness

Internal verifiers are responsible for ensuring that all assessments, whether devised by the centre or provided by SQA, meet the requirements of validity, practicability, equity and fairness. This should happen **before** candidates take the assessment.
Arranging meetings between assessors to discuss planned assessments will help to minimise differences in interpretation. It is not necessary to use the same assessment between different groups and/or assessment sites, but all assessments must be checked for validity, practicality, equity and fairness.

Agreeing a scheme for judging evidence also helps assessors to make accurate and consistent judgements in line with national standards. Depending on the method of assessment used, the scheme might be a checklist for observing candidate performance or a set of questions (with responses) to test underlying knowledge and understanding. The use of digital evidence, the protocols for professional discussion, and the procedures for any indirect evidence of candidate achievement, such as witness testimony should all be discussed and agreed. It may not be necessary to repeat this process each year **provided that** there has been no change to the unit, that it is being delivered by the same assessors, and that no issues have arisen from previous internal activity or from external verification. However, the internal verifier **must** check each year that there have been no changes to the unit or any updates.

The strategy for sampling assessments should be agreed and explained. The strategy will depend on the size and structure of your organisation and the range of qualifications offered, but it must take into account all assessors, candidate groups and assessment sites to ensure that sampling is appropriate. This can range from the internal verifier in a small centre that has one assessor looking at all assessments, to a rolling programme of internal verification in a large centre with several hundred candidates taking the same qualification. The most important point is that national standards are being applied consistently over time.

During assessment: standardisation activities and sampling assessor judgements

Standardisation and sampling during the assessment process are both essential to ensure the reliability of assessment judgements for all candidates in a centre.
Standardisation activities support assessors in making consistent and reliable assessment judgements against the national standard.

Sampling is the process whereby the internal verifier checks that all assessors are making consistent and reliable assessment judgements against the national standard. Standardisation and sampling are therefore linked activities. The findings from standardisation activities may lead the internal verifier to increase the sample or the scope of the sampling process to ensure that standards are maintained.
It is essential that standardisation and sampling are carried out for any alternative or satellite assessment centres — and in any partnership arrangement — to ensure that assessment judgements are accurate and consistent for all candidates registered with your centre, regardless of where they took the assessment.

During and after assessment: maintaining records

It is important that centres maintain accurate records. Centres must hold records of candidate assessment and internal verification and retain physical evidence of candidate assessment for specified lengths of time.

Internal verification records
Records of internal verification activity should include:

- the centre's documented internal verification policies and procedures
- reports of meetings with assessors to discuss assessment planning
- reports of standardisation exercises
- records of observation of assessment
- records of all sampling activity
- feedback to assessors and follow up of any identified actions

After assessment: reviewing internal verification

It is important to carry out regular reviews of the internal verification system to ensure that it is working effectively, and to identify possible improvements.

It is also good practice to carry out a more formal evaluation after delivery has taken place as well as throughout the delivery stage. The internal verifier should lead this process, with the involvement of all assessors for each qualification delivered in the centre. This could include the following activities:

- reflection on the assessment approach and judgements in relation to validity, reliability, practicality, equity and fairness
- reflection on the assessment process — identifying instances of good practice and where there had been challenges
- analysis of the internal verification process in terms of its impact
- discussion of the sampling process in terms of improving reliability and providing support

Appendix 1 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
SQA Co-ordinator	• operational role in managing all necessary SQA materials, deadlines, paperwork, returns and systems ensure use of IV policy and paperwork across the centre for returns to the SQA
SLT Departmental Links and/or SQA Co-ordinators	• ensure PTs are implementing IV policy • monitor the outcomes from IV activity • provide support to PTs and teaching staff as required
PTs/FHs Curriculum	• ensure that IV and moderation activity is included in departmental meetings monitoring calendars. • ensure that the chosen assessment instrument is valid, reliable, practicable and equitable and is marked to the national standard • ensure that assessors apply standards of assessment uniformly and consistently by arranging standardisation exercises • ensure that teaching staff carry out their IV duties according to agreed policy • provide opportunities for staff to undertake IV and record this activity in line with agreed process • ensure that teaching staff have access to instruments of assessment including appropriate support documentation • provide support to staff as required. • complete all SQA paperwork as required • keep SLT link and SQA coordinator informed of any issues arising • retain evidence of assessment and IV activity in the event of

	an appeal under exceptional circumstances
Teachers/Assessors/Internal Verifiers	• carry out IV activities as instructed by PTs/FHs as per the departmental monitoring calendar. • record all IV activity through agreed processes • ensure all instruments of assessment are used according to SQA guidance

Appendix 2

Suggested Timeline

Month	Task	By Whom
June and August	Departments should: • Agree to a set assessment calendar to be followed for all certificated classes. • Review existing assessments and introduce new assessments - make any alterations as required to meet the National Standard	PTs/FHs and Staff
October/ November	Department should internally verify outcomes to date of their National courses Results and findings should be noted via agreed recording processes	This process may involve the whole department but will certainly involve the assessor(s) and the Internal Verifier
November	Departments should internally verify the assessment tool(s) to be used Carry out IV Activity for Round 1 of SQA Verification (date dependant on SQA)	As above
January/ February	Departments should internally verify the second unit of their national courses. Results and findings should be noted via agreed recording processes	As above
February	IV of assessment activities should also take place Results and findings should be noted via agreed recording processes Carry out IV Activity for Round 2 of SQA Verification (date	As above

	dependant on SQA)	
March	Departments should Internally Verify the Added Value Unit of their National 4 course Results and findings should be noted via agreed recording processes Carry out IV Activity for Round 3 of SQA Verification (date dependant on SQA)	As above
May/June	**Departments should:** • Review process from the current year. • Discuss the strengths, development needs and next steps of their assessment process for the following session.	PTs/FHs and Staff

Additional timeline specific to session 20/21

August - October	Schools determine how to assess national 5 courses in light of no formal examination
November	Monthly meetings of PTs/FHs to begin, facilitated by LA officers, to support moderation and assessment activity
Nov- January	Reviewed and amended IV Policies to be agreed with link DHT
January – March/April	Ongoing monthly PT/FH meetings
February/March	Initial data capture to ensure robustness of N5 estimates
March/April	Reviewing and refining of N5 estimates
TBC	Submission of estimates to SQA

Appendix 3

Challenge Questions

1. Have assessments been reviewed in line with course modifications for session 2020/2021

2. Is the assessment being used appropriate for its purpose?

3. Does it allow candidates to produce sufficient evidence that they have the knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the appropriate national standards?

4. Is there an appropriate assessment scheme/marking instructions/recording mechanism to check that the candidate's evidence meets the requirements of the national standard?

5. Is the assessment fair and equitable and accessible to all candidates?

6. Have all candidates been considered for AAA and have these been implemented for all assessments?

7. Does the assessment meet the specified requirements of the unit/award?

8. Are staff confident in determining, through the use of agreed assessment tools, fair and appropriate estimates for all candidates?

9. What processes are in place to ensure that this is the case?

10. Have all staff involved in Estimate production completed the SQA Academy Course before commencing on the process.

11. Are all staff aware of the whole school policy on Estimates production?

Renfrewshire Council

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **School Holiday Arrangements School Session 2022/2023**

1. Summary

1.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to determine the pattern of school holiday arrangements for the school session beginning August 2022.

1.2. In line with consultation arrangements, three possible proposals were circulated to staff, parent councils, pupil councils, teaching and other trade unions for consideration.

1.3. The school holiday proposal preferred by the majority of consultees is detailed in appendix 1 to this report with appendices 2 and 3 showing the holiday patterns less favoured. Appendix 4 is a summary of consultation responses.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Members of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board are asked to authorise the director of children's services to set school holiday arrangements for academic year 2022/2023 in line with appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background

3.1. Each year the Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to determine a framework for school holiday arrangements for the session beginning in August of the following year.

3.2. Consultation has taken place with staff, parent councils, pupil councils, teaching and other trade unions for consideration on three possible proposals. The preferred proposal is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

3.3. The recommended arrangements attached are the best match possible to those being considered by neighbouring councils given the varying fair holiday arrangements.

3.4. The proposed patterns meet, where possible, the majority of the desirable features which are:

- aligning the dates of major holidays with those of neighbouring councils;
- providing a two week break at Christmas, including Christmas eve;
- providing a mid-term break in February; and
- providing a two week school holiday in spring.

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications
None.

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications
None.

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications
None.

4. Legal Implications
None.

5. Property/Assets Implications
None.

6. Information Technology Implications
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety Implications
None.

9. Procurement Implications
None.

10. Risk Implications
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk
None

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1: Proposed School Holiday Arrangements – 2021/2022

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is (Laura Baillie, Resources Support Manager, 07970876292 laura.baillie@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

Children's Services
GM/LB
10 March 2021

Author: Laura Baillie, Resources Support Manager, 07970876292
laura.baillie@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Renfrewshire Council

Proposed School Holiday Arrangements

School Session 2022/2023

Option B

2 in-service days on return in August
1 Day St Andrews Day
Finish Wednesday 21 December 2022
2 Day February Break
1 Day Start of May
2 day End of May
Finish Tuesday 27 June 2023
In-Service Days After Holidays with exception of August

Term	Break	Dates of Attendance	
First		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 12 August 2022 (IS)
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Monday 15 August 2022 (IS)
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 16 August 2022
	Local Holiday/Closed	Schools Closed	Friday 23 September 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 26 September 2022
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 27 September 2022
	Mid Term	Schools Closed	Monday 10 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 11 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 12 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Thursday 13 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Friday 14 October 2022
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Monday 17 October 2022 (IS)
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 18 October 2022
	St Andrew's Day	Schools Closed	Wednesday 30 November 2022
		Schools Re-open	Thursday 1 December 2022
	Christmas	Schools Closed	Thursday 22 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Friday 23 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 26 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 27 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 28 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Thursday 29 December 2022
Second		Schools Closed	Friday 30 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 2 January 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 3 January 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 4 January 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Thursday 5 January 2023
	Mid-Term	Schools Closed	Monday 13 February 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 14 February 2023
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Wednesday 15 February 2023 (IS)
		Schools Re-Open	Thursday 16 February 2023
	Spring	Schools Closed	Monday 3 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 4 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 5 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Thursday 6 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Friday 7 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Monday 10 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 11 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 12 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Thursday 13 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Friday 14 April 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Monday 17 April 2023
Third	May Day	Schools Closed	Monday 1 May 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 2 May 2023
	Local Holiday/Closed	Schools Closed	Monday 29 May 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 30 May 2023
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Wednesday 31 May 2023 (IS)
		Schools Re-Open	Thursday 1 June 2023
	End of session	Schools Closed	Wednesday 28 June 2023

Teachers Return - Monday 14 August 2023

(IS) - In-Service Day

In-Service Days (Only Staff Attend on these days - No Pupils)

Friday	**12/08/22**
Monday	**15/08/22**
Monday	**17/10/22**
Wednesday	**15/02/23**
Wednesday	**31/05/23**

Renfrewshire Council

APPENDIX 2

Proposed School Holiday Arrangements

School Session 2022/2023

2 in-service days on return in August
1 Day St Andrews Day
Finish Wednesday 21 December 2022
2 Day February Break
1 Day Start of May
2 day End of May
Finish Tuesday 27 June 2023
In-Service Days Before Holidays

Option A

Term	Break	Dates of Attendance	
First		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 12 August 2022 (IS)
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Monday 15 August 2022 (IS)
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 16 August 2022
	Local Holiday/Closed	Schools Closed	Friday 23 September 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 26 September 2022
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 27 September 2022
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 7 October 2022 (IS)
	Mid Term	Schools Closed	Monday 10 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 11 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 12 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Thursday 13 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Friday 14 October 2022
		Schools Re-Open	Monday 17 October 2022
	St Andrew's Day	Schools Closed	Wednesday 30 November 2022
		Schools Re-open	Thursday 1 December 2022
	Christmas	Schools Closed	Thursday 22 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Friday 23 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 26 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 27 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 28 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Thursday 29 December 2022
Second		Schools Closed	Friday 30 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 2 January 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 3 January 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 4 January 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Thursday 5 January 2023
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 10 February 2023 (IS)
	Mid-Term	Schools Closed	Monday 13 February 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 14 February 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Wednesday 15 February 2023
	Spring	Schools Closed	Monday 3 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 4 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 5 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Thursday 6 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Friday 7 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Monday 10 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 11 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 12 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Thursday 13 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Friday 14 April 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Monday 17 April 2023
Third	May Day	Schools Closed	Monday 1 May 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 2 May 2023
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 26 May 2023 (IS)
	Local Holiday/Closed	Schools Closed	Monday 29 May 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 30 May 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Wednesday 31 May 2023
	End of session	Schools Closed	Wednesday 28 June 2023

Teachers Return - **Monday 14 August 2023**

(IS) - In-Service Day

In-Service Days **(Only Staff Attend on these days - No Pupils)**

Friday	**12/08/22**
Monday	**15/08/22**
Friday	**07/10/22**
Friday	**10/02/23**
Friday	**26/05/23**

Renfrewshire Council

APPENDIX 3

2 in-service days on return in August
1 Day St Andrews Day
Finish Wednesday 21 December 2022
1 day February Break
2 day Start of May
2 day End of May
Finish Tuesday 27 June 2023
In-Service Days Before Holidays

Proposed School Holiday Arrangements

School Session 2022/2023

Option C

Term	Break	Dates of Attendance	
First		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 12 August 2022 (IS)
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Monday 15 August 2022 (IS)
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 16 August 2022
	Local Holiday/Closed	Schools Closed	Friday 23 September 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 26 September 2022
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 27 September 2022
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 7 October 2022 (IS)
	Mid Term	Schools Closed	Monday 10 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 11 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 12 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Thursday 13 October 2022
		Schools Closed	Friday 14 October 2022
		Schools Re-Open	Monday 17 October 2022
	St Andrew's Day	Schools Closed	Wednesday 30 November 2022
		Schools Re-open	Thursday 1 December 2022
	Christmas	Schools Closed	Thursday 22 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Friday 23 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 26 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 27 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 28 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Thursday 29 December 2022
Second		Schools Closed	Friday 30 December 2022
		Schools Closed	Monday 2 January 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 3 January 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 4 January 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Thursday 5 January 2023
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 10 February 2023 (IS)
	Mid-Term	Schools Closed	Monday 13 February 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Tuesday 14 February 2023
	Spring	Schools Closed	Monday 3 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 4 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 5 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Thursday 6 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Friday 7 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Monday 10 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 11 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Wednesday 12 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Thursday 13 April 2023
		Schools Closed	Friday 14 April 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Monday 17 April 2023
Third	May Day	Schools Closed	Monday 1 May 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 2 May 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Wednesday 3 May 2023
		In-Service Day - Closed for Pupils Only	Friday 26 May 2023 (IS)
	Local Holiday/Closed	Schools Closed	Monday 29 May 2023
		Schools Closed	Tuesday 30 May 2023
		Schools Re-Open	Wednesday 31 May 2023
	End of session	Schools Closed	Wednesday 28 June 2023

Teachers Return - **Monday 14 August 2023**

(IS) - In-Service Day

In-Service Days **(Only Staff Attend on these days - No Pupils)**

Friday	**12/08/22**
Monday	**15/08/22**
Friday	**07/10/22**
Friday	**10/02/23**
Friday	**26/05/23**

APPENDIX 4

	Option A			Option B			Option C		
Secondary schools	School	Parent Council	Pupil Council	School	Parent Council	Pupil Council	School	Parent Council	Pupil Council
Castlehead High School				Yes					
Gleniffer High School				Yes					
Gryffe High School									
Johnstone High School				Yes	Yes				
Linwood High School				Yes					
Paisley Grammar				Yes	Yes	Yes			
Park Mains High School			Yes	Yes					
Renfrew High School				Yes					
St Andrew's Academy				Yes					
St Benedict's High School				Yes	Yes				
Trinity High School		Yes							
Primary schools									
Arkleston Primary School									
Auchenlodment Primary School - Nursery									
Bargarran Primary School	Yes	Yes							
Barsail Primary School				Yes				Yes	
Bishopton Primary School				Yes					
Brediland Primary School									
Bridge of Weir Primary School - Nursery				Yes	Yes				
Bushes Primary School - Nursery		Yes							
Cochrane Castle Primary School				Yes	Yes	Yes			
East Fulton Primary School - Nursery				Yes					
Fordbank Primary School				Yes					
Gallowhill Primary School - Nursery				Yes	Yes	Yes			
Glencoats Primary School									
Heriot Primary School - Nursery	Yes								
Houston Primary School - Nursery									
Howwood Primary School		Yes	Yes	Yes					
Inchinnan Primary School							Yes	Yes	
Kilbarchan Primary School									
Kirklandneuk Primary School				Yes	Yes	Yes			
Langbank Primary School				Yes	Yes				Yes
Langcraigs Primary School				Yes	Yes	Yes			
Lochfield Primary School							Yes	Yes	Yes
Lochwinnoch Primary School - Nursery									
Mossvale Primary School - SA Nursery				Yes					
Newmains Primary School				Yes	Yes				
Our Lady of Peace Primary School - Nursery							Yes		
Ralston Primary School - Nursery				Yes				Yes	
Rashielea Primary School									
St Anne's Primary School - Nursery				Yes					
St Anthony's Primary School	Yes								
St Catherine's Primary School - Nursery		Yes							
St Charles' Primary School - Nursery		Yes	Yes	Yes					Yes
St David's Primary School				Yes		Yes		Yes	
St Fergus' Primary School									
St Fillan's Primary School				Yes		Yes			
St James' Primary School (Paisley)				Yes					
St James' Primary School (Renfrew) - Nursery		Yes		Yes					
St John Bosco Primary School - SA Nursery				Yes	Yes				
St John Ogilvie Primary School				Yes		Yes		Yes	
St Margaret's Primary School - SA Nursery									
St Mary's Primary School - Nursery									
St Paul's Primary School									
St Peter's Primary School - Nursery									
Thorn Primary School									
Todholm Primary School - Nursery				Yes	Yes	Yes			
Wallace Primary School - Nursery				Yes					
West Primary School				Yes					
Williamsburgh Primary School - SA Nursery				Yes				Yes	
Woodlands Primary School				Yes				Yes	
ASN schools									
Riverbrae									
Mary Russell School				Yes	Yes	Yes			
Early Learning and Childcare Centres									
Douglas Street Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Ferguslie Early Learning and Childcare Centre							Yes	Yes	
Foxlea Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Glenburn Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Glendee Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Glenfield Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Hollybush Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Hugh Smiley Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Moorpark Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Paisley Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
Spateston Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
West Johnstone Early Learning and Childcare Centre									
	3	8	3	37	13	10	4	9	3
Overall Option Totals	14			60			16		

Renfrewshire Council

To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019**

1. Summary

1.1. The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on 7 May 2019 and received Royal Assent on 11 June 2019. The 2019 Act has been implemented on an incremental basis. From November 2019 a child under the age of 12 couldn't be referred to a children's hearing on offense grounds but could still be charged at that time of a criminal offence.

1.2. The next stage of the implementation of the 2019 Act will increase the age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12 in Scotland and aligns with the current minimum age of criminal prosecution in Scotland. The target date for implementation is scheduled for the autumn of 2021. This implementation means that children under 12 will no longer be charged with criminal offences.

1.3. The change means that children under the age of 12 will no longer be stigmatised by being criminalised at a young age, be labelled as "offender" or disadvantaged by having convictions for the purposes of disclosure, which can adversely affect them later in life.

1.4. The number of children under the age of 12 charged in Renfrewshire has historically been low. Approximately 20 children under the age of 12 have been charged with criminal offences each year for the past 4 years. Whilst these numbers are low there will changes in practice to address situations where these children come to the attention of the police and this could have significant impact on social work locality teams. Staff training will be undertaken and multi-agency professional guidance will be undertaken to support the change in legislation and practice.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Policy Board is asked to note:

a) the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 received Royal Assent on 11 June 2019;

b) that since 29 November 2019 children under the age of 12 can no longer be referred to a children's hearing on offence grounds:

c) the age of criminal responsibility will increase from 8 to 12 in the autumn of 2021; and

d) multi-agency professional guidance and training will be provided to assist staff in discharging the change in practice.

---

3. Background

3.1. The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 came into force on 29th November 2019 and is being implemented incrementally. The next stage of implementation will see the age of criminal responsibility increase from 8 to 12.

3.2. Prior to the 2019 Act, the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland was two years younger than the rest of the UK, the lowest figure in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. The cut-off point of eight years of age dates back to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, which raised the age of criminal responsibility from seven to eight across the UK.

3.3. Prior to this legislation children as young as eight could be charged with a criminal offence, referred to the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration and could then referred to a children's hearing on offence grounds. If the grounds of referral were accepted or proven at the children's hearing the child could then have a criminal record which could have compromised their childhood and limited opportunities and life chances in adulthood, particularly around employment.

3.4. Since November 2019, children could no longer be referred to a children's hearing on the ground that they committed an offence when that behaviour took place when they were under the age of 12. It is also no longer possible for children under 12 to obtain new criminal convictions.

3.5. The 2019 Act also makes changes to the law on the disclosure of criminal records obtained as a child and of other information relating to individuals working or seeking to work with children or certain adults. It provides the Police with additional powers in relation to taking certain children to a place of safety who are suspected of serious criminal behaviour. It also confers additional powers to the Police on the search of certain children; on police interviews with certain children; and on the taking of forensic samples from certain children.

3.6. The 2019 Act aligns with longstanding presumptions around maturity, rights, and participation. The age of 12 also has other existing significance in Scots' law. It also has particular significance for care-experienced children (especially those looked after away from home), whose behaviours are more

likely to have been reported to police (and therefore to attract a criminalising state response) than Scotland's child population in general.

3.7. Previously acquired convictions still exist as does the police's power to retain information relating to a time when a child was under 12. Under Part 2 of the Act, which came into force on November 30, 2020, convictions for children under 12 will no longer be automatically disclosed on any disclosure certificate. However, information about behaviour that took place when a child was under 12 can be disclosed, if appropriate, as Other Relevant Information, on an enhanced disclosure or PVG scheme record.

3.8. The number of children under the age of 12 charged in Renfrewshire has historically been low. Approximately 20 children under the age of 12 have been charged with criminal offences each year for the past 4 years. Whilst these numbers are low there will changes in practice to address situations where these children come to the attention of the police could have significant impact on social work locality teams. Staff training will be undertaken and multi-agency professional guidance will be undertaken to support the change in legislation and practice.

3.9. The 2019 Act creates a specific power authorising a police constable to take a child to a place of safety in cases where the child is behaving (or is likely to behave) in a way that is causing or risks causing significant harm to another person and the child's removal is necessary to protect the other person from an immediate risk of such harm.

3.10. Once removed to a place of safety, the child can be looked after there for a maximum of 24 hours. Places of safety include:

- residential or other establishments provided by local authorities
- hospitals or surgeries
- the dwelling of any suitable person
- police stations.

3.11. The child can only be kept in the place of safety for as long as one of the following reasons applies:

- arrangements have not yet been made for the child's care or protection, such arrangements may be as simple as returning the child to his or her home or to a relative's home, but in other cases might involve steps such as a child protection order being applied for
- an order authorising the taking of an intimate sample is being sought by police.

3.12. Local authorities will need to identify premises for places of safety. Although it is not anticipated that the Police will make requests to access a Place of Safety on a regular basis, the Local Authority area will need to have identified appropriate options and have a process in place on how to access these via a point of contact when this is required. This may place pressure on our residential children's houses if suitable alternatives cannot be identified.

3.13. The Act authorises the conduct of an investigative interview if certain tests are met the first test is that a constable has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child by behaving in a violent or dangerous way, caused or potentially

causing *serious* physical harm to another person or, by behaving in a sexually violent or sexually coercive way, caused or risked causing *harm* (whether physical or not – so including psychological harm) to another person.

3.14. The second test is that the constable considers that an investigative interview is *necessary* to fully investigate the incident which involved suspected harmful behaviour by the child. A child and a parent can agree to an investigative interview being conducted or a Child Interview Order (CIO) can be sought by police.

3.15. Historically Social Workers have not been involved in the interviewing of children who are accused of criminal acts but instead have been used to act as an Appropriate Adult when a parent cannot attend or as an additional support for the child during the interview process. This will change with full implementation of the Act and will be a significant change for Social Workers in Renfrewshire and across Scotland. Not least of all since should a child over 12 commit a serious offence this joint investigative interview in which the Social Worker participates could form a significant part of the evidence in any prosecution. The professional body Social Work Scotland and Scotland's Chief Social Work Officers have agreed that these processes will be closely aligned with existing Child Protection Processes going forward and only Social Workers who are trained in Joint Investigative Interview techniques will participate in these interviews.

3.16. It is anticipated that the elements of the Act outlined above will be implemented in late Autumn 2021. Key points to note;

- ministerial Guidance is currently being developed
- Police and Social Work Scotland are currently developing operational guidance in relation to joint investigative interviews where children have been involved in offending type behaviour.

3.17. This is important and significant legislation which has the potential to change for the better the lives of the very small number of children who commit crimes in Scotland. Notwithstanding this, it will bring additional responsibilities for Local Authorities in terms of the provision of places of safety and the involvement of social workers in Joint Investigative Interviews. John Trainer, Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice in Children's Services is Social Work Scotland's National Lead for the Age of Criminal Responsibility implementation. A local multi-agency group is working to ensure that as an area Renfrewshire is ready to implement the next stage of the 2019 Act.

Implications of this report

1. Financial
None.

2. HR and Organisational Development
Staff training on a multi-agency basis will be delivered to support the implementation of the new duties and change in legislation.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is safe	-	The new legislation will require services to work together on a multi-agency basis to meet the welfare needs of children under the age of 12 who are involved in offending as well as working to support victims.
Building strong, safe and resilient communities	-	The new legislation will require services to work together on a multi-agency basis to meet the welfare needs of children under the age of 12 who are involved in offending as well as working to support victims
Working together to improve outcomes	-	The new legislation will require services to work together on a multi-agency basis to meet the welfare needs of children under the age of 12 who are involved in offending as well as working to support victims

4. Legal

Significant change in legislation to increase the age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12 years.

5. Property/Assets

None.

6. Information Technology

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.

8. Health and Safety

None.

9. Procurement

None.

10. Risk

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

12. Cosla Policy Position

None.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1: None

Children's Services
JT/MMcC 14/04/21

Author: Michelle McCargo Children's Services Manager
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To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **The National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Project**

1. Summary

1.1. The National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Project was established to develop a new approach to the joint investigative interviewing of children in Scotland. A Joint Investigative Interview is undertaken by a Police Officer and a Social Worker when it is suspected that a child has been subject to some form of abuse.

1.2. The aims of the new approach are to improve the quality of experience of child victims and witnesses, minimise re-traumatisation, and improve the quality of evidence gathered during joint investigative interviews to prevent the need for these children to have to give evidence in person as part of court processes.

1.3. This new approach is called the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM).The development of the SCIM for joint investigative interviewing forms part of the response to recommendations within the Evidence and Procedure Review, Scottish Court Service, 2015.

1.4. The Evidence and Procedure Review- Next Steps report, published early in 2016, set out the findings from further consideration undertaken by Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) in relation to obtaining best evidence from child and vulnerable witnesses. Following publication of this report, the Justice Board commissioned the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to lead further work to develop the recommended systematic approach to capturing and presenting evidence in pre-recorded form.

1.5. Since 2017, Police Scotland and Social Work Scotland have been leading on work (alongside other agencies) to improve the quality and process for joint investigative interviews with children considering the recommendations of the Evidence and Procedure Review Joint Investigative Interviews Work Stream. Fundamental to that work has been the development of the SCIM.

1.6. The National (JII) Project Team was established to develop a new model of practice for Scotland and a pilot phase began in 2019, involving six local authorities and three police divisions. Two further pilot sites commenced in 2020/2021 involving another two local authorities. The first pilots are now live in practice with the two final pilot sites expected to go live later this year.

1.7. Renfrewshire Council is participating in the North Strathclyde Pilot. The North Strathclyde Partnership is: four Local Authorities (East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire), two Police Divisions (G Division for East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire and K Division for Inverclyde and Renfrewshire), one Health Board (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde), one SCRA Locality (North Strathclyde), four Sheriff Courts (Paisley, Glasgow, Dunbartonshire and Greenock).

1.8. The charity Children 1st is our partner in this endeavour and together the aim is to provide a truly child centred trauma responsive approach. A fundamental principle of the partnership is for recovery that is trauma informed to be built into the process from the point of disclosure for children. Children 1st will provide recovery support to the child and their family.

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2. Recommendations

2.1. Elected members are asked to:

a) Note Renfrewshire's involvement in the North Strathclyde Pilot

b) Note that a further report will be brought back to Board once the pilot has concluded to members on implications for policy and practice in Renfrewshire.

---

3. Background

3.1. Joint Investigative Interviewing is an approach unique to Scotland, combining the knowledge and skills of police officers and social workers to enable children to recount abuse they may have experienced. These interviews typically take place when a Child Protection Investigation is being undertaken however, they can sometimes also be used when a child has witnessed a violent crime or another serious incident.

3.2. In March 2015 The Evidence and Procedure Review (2015) was published. The review concluded that "consideration is urgently given to the development of a new, structured scheme that treats child and vulnerable witnesses in an entirely different way, away from the court setting altogether." and "There must be sufficient investment in the quality of interviewing, questioning, and examination applying the highest international standards and requiring appropriate training and qualification"

3.3. Following on from the initial report, the Evidence and Procedure Review Next Steps Report (2016) was published. It emphasised the importance of ensuring that interviews of child witnesses are of a consistently high standard. The report stated that good practice existed across Scotland, however the view was held that different approaches were in place and that significant improvements could be made.

3.4. The Report recommended that pre-recorded evidence should be used at trial, removing any need for children and vulnerable adult witnesses to attend Court. The Next Steps Report commissioned the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to lead further work and two work-streams were established;

i) The pre-recording of further evidence

ii) The visual recording of Evidence in Chief – the Joint Investigative Interviews work-stream group.

3.5. The report recognised that approaches to who was trained, provision of refresher training and whether evaluations of interview practice were undertaken varied across the country and this needed to be addressed. The report made 33 recommendations to improve the quality of Joint Investigative Interviews. One of the recommendations was to ensure the training for interviewers reflects the highly specialist skills that are required for this task: The training programme for Joint Investigative Interviewers should be developed and extended to enable more in depth training of interviewers, recognising the *degree of specialist skill required to secure best evidence.*

3.6. This resulted in the development of the Scottish Child Interview Model. This new approach to joint investigative interviewing is aimed at providing a higher quality of forensic interview that ensures best evidence for court and for civil proceedings such as children's hearings and local child protection services. The ultimate outcome is to keep children safe and ensure that they have the right to justice. the new model for JII is a new model of practice, requiring system change. It is not solely the improved training of interviewers.

3.7. In developing this new approach, care has been taken to ensure that practice within the new model of JII is trauma informed. Interviewers are provided with the knowledge and skills to consider the impact of children's experiences upon their ability to participate in the interview and to actively plan for how the needs of each individual child will be met throughout the interview process. Critically, the new model has been purposefully designed to minimise re-traumatisation of children.

3.8. The first cohorts of Social Workers and Police Officers were trained in the Scottish Child Interview Model in late 2019 and early 2020. This is a modular based course, which requires participants to pass each module before they can move onto the next. The course has 5 modules and is much more in-depth than previous JII training, all aimed at improving the protection of vulnerable children.

3.9. In 2019, Renfrewshire Council worked in partnership with several local authority areas and Police Scotland to develop a bid to be a pilot area as part of the National JII project. The application was successful and the North Strathclyde Pilot was established and the partnership is as follows: Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, two Police Divisions (G Division for East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire and K Division for Inverclyde and Renfrewshire), one Health Board (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde), one SCRA Locality (North Strathclyde), four Sheriff Courts (Paisley, Glasgow, Dunbartonshire and Greenock) and a third sector partner in national charity Children 1st.

3.10. The North Strathclyde Pilot consists of a specialist Joint Investigative Interview Cadre. Each Local Authority has seconded one Children and Families Social Worker to the Cadre and each Police Division has seconded 2 Public Protection officers. Children 1st provide post interview counselling for children and their families. The Police officers and Social Workers in the Cadre have been trained in the new Scottish Child Interview Model and are co-located in Osprey House, a Police office in Renfrewshire. The Cadre share responsibility for interviewing children from the 4 Local Authority areas instead of the Renfrewshire secondee interviewing Renfrewshire children only.

3.11. A Strategic Oversight Group chaired by Renfrewshire's Chief Social Work Officer oversees the progress of the pilot and has representatives from COSLA, SCRA, Scottish Government and all of the partners involved in the pilot. In addition, there is an operational group which monitors the day to day work of the Cadre.

3.12. It is hoped that by bringing together a specialist JII Cadre (Police & Social Work) and Children 1st, this will ensure;

i) The JII cadre have advanced knowledge, skills and competencies and the required experience of forensic interviews that produce best quality evidence and ensure the protection of the child;

ii) This partnership develops a best practice model based on shared resources, learning and will provide risk sharing arrangements across authorities that ensure that the quality of the interventions are not compromised;

iii) We are consistent in improving the experiences for children and their families who are subject to Joint Investigative Interviews; and

iv) The fundamental principle of recovery, that is, trauma informed practice, is to be built into the process from the point of disclosure for children.

3.13. The progress of our pilot is being monitored closely by the National JII team and the learning will be used to inform the future direction of how children and vulnerable adult witnesses are delivered in the long term across Scotland.

3.14. Renfrewshire's involvement in the Pilot has been met from current resources. Contact has been established with the Scottish Government to discuss the ongoing funding to allow the continuation of the pilot in the longer term as additional resources will be required to make it sustainable.

Implications of this report

1. Financial
None.

2. HR and Organisational Development
None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is thriving - *enter details/ delete if not appropriate*

Our Renfrewshire is well	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*
Our Renfrewshire is fair	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*
Our Renfrewshire is safe	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*
Reshaping our place, our economy and our future	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*
Building strong, safe and resilient communities	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*
Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*
Working together to improve outcomes	-	*enter details/ delete if not appropriate*

4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk

None.

Children's Services
MMcC/JT
12 April 2021

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To: **Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

On: **20 May 2021**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together**

1. Summary

1.1. The issue of children who are accommodated by local authorities being placed in separate placements from their brothers and sisters was identified as an area which required attention by The Independent Care Review. Children's Services agreed to consider improvements in keeping brother and sisters together as part of the response to The Independent Care Review's Stop-Go campaign. The Stop-Go campaign highlighted areas where services would commit to addressing areas of concern identified by care experienced young people and find solutions to these.

1.2. The Renfrewshire Children's Champions Board carried out a survey to secure the views of care experienced young people in Renfrewshire and have produced a report, "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together" which contains recommendations on improving practice in this area. A copy of the report is attached at appendix1.

1.3. The Champions Board work has worked with Children's Services to develop the Renfrewshire policy on keeping brother and sisters together on a co-production basis. The draft policy which is attached at appendix 2 contains a pledge "When children come into care Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together".

1.4. It is recognised that there will be times when brothers and sisters aren't placed together, and the policy requires Children's Services to report on this. In addition, the policy introduces a clear decision making process for times when brothers and sisters can't be placed together, arrangements to maintain family time and a commitment to regularly reviewing brothers and sisters placed in separate care settings.

1.5. This report seeks the approval of the Policy Board for the Keeping brothers and sisters together policy.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Members of the Board are asked to

a) acknowledge the leadership of the Children's Champions Board on the production of their report "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together"; and
b) approve the policy on keeping brothers and sisters together which was developed on a coproduction basis by the Children's Champions Board and Children's Services.

---

3. Background

3.1. The Renfrewshire Children's Champions Board consists of a range of care experienced young people. The Champions Board has in the past met regularly with elected members and senior officers from a range of agencies providing services for children and young people in Renfrewshire. The Champions Board has been reviewing how best to influence and engage further with decision makers.

3.2. Whilst developing their proposal on how best to engage with elected members and officers the Champions Board have been busy working with care experienced young people to identify and address some significant issues. The Champions Board developed and undertook a survey with care experienced young people and highlighted a number of priorities. The highest priority identified by care experienced young people was ensuring that if children require to be accommodated by the local authority that they should be able to stay together.

3.3. The Champions Board undertook a formal survey on contact between children who are in care and their brothers and sisters and produced a report, attached at appendix 1. In terms of true participation and influencing the development of policy the Champions Board approached the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice and requested a response to the recommendations in the report. The draft policy, developed in partnership with the Champions Board is attached at appendix 2.

3.4. The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 became law in January 2021 and places new duties for local authorities in relation to ensuring that brothers and sisters are supported to be together and where this isn't possible to have their relationship supported on an ongoing basis. The draft policy is compliant with the requirements of this piece of legislation.

3.5. It is recognised that brothers and sisters are sometimes placed in separate care arrangements because of availability of foster carers, kinship carers or residential services able to take family groups. The policy pledges that Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together. It is recognised, that on occasions for safeguarding reasons this won't be possible. In all other circumstances the policy requires the explicit approval of the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice to placing brothers and sisters in separate care arrangements and to record fully the reasons for this. In addition, an annual report on delivering the pledge will be produced to hold the service to account for performance in this area.

3.6. A range or practice tools have been developed to ensure that in circumstances where brothers and sisters aren't placed together that family time is arranged to promote and maintain relationships.

3.7. The first annual report on compliance with the policy, if approved by Board, will be produced as soon after April 2022 as possible.

Implications of this report

1. Financial
No significant financial implications.

2. HR and Organisational Development
Some minor training development work will be required to assist staff when the policy is developed and agreed.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is thriving	-	Providing good quality care is central to ensuring that the most vulnerable children in Renfrewshire are provided with an opportunity to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.
Building strong, safe and resilient communities		Providing children and young people with safe, supportive and nurturing placements, increases the likelihood of them becoming effective citizens who contribute productively to the communities in which they live.

4. Legal
The Children (Scotland) Bill is expected to become law in 2021 and places new duties on local authorities in relation to how they support and promote contact between brothers and sisters.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers
None.

Children's Services
JCT
9 April 2021

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0141 628 6860

KEEPING BROTHERS & SISTERS TOGETHER

SURVEY REPORT

RENFREWSHIRE Champions Board

MAY 2020

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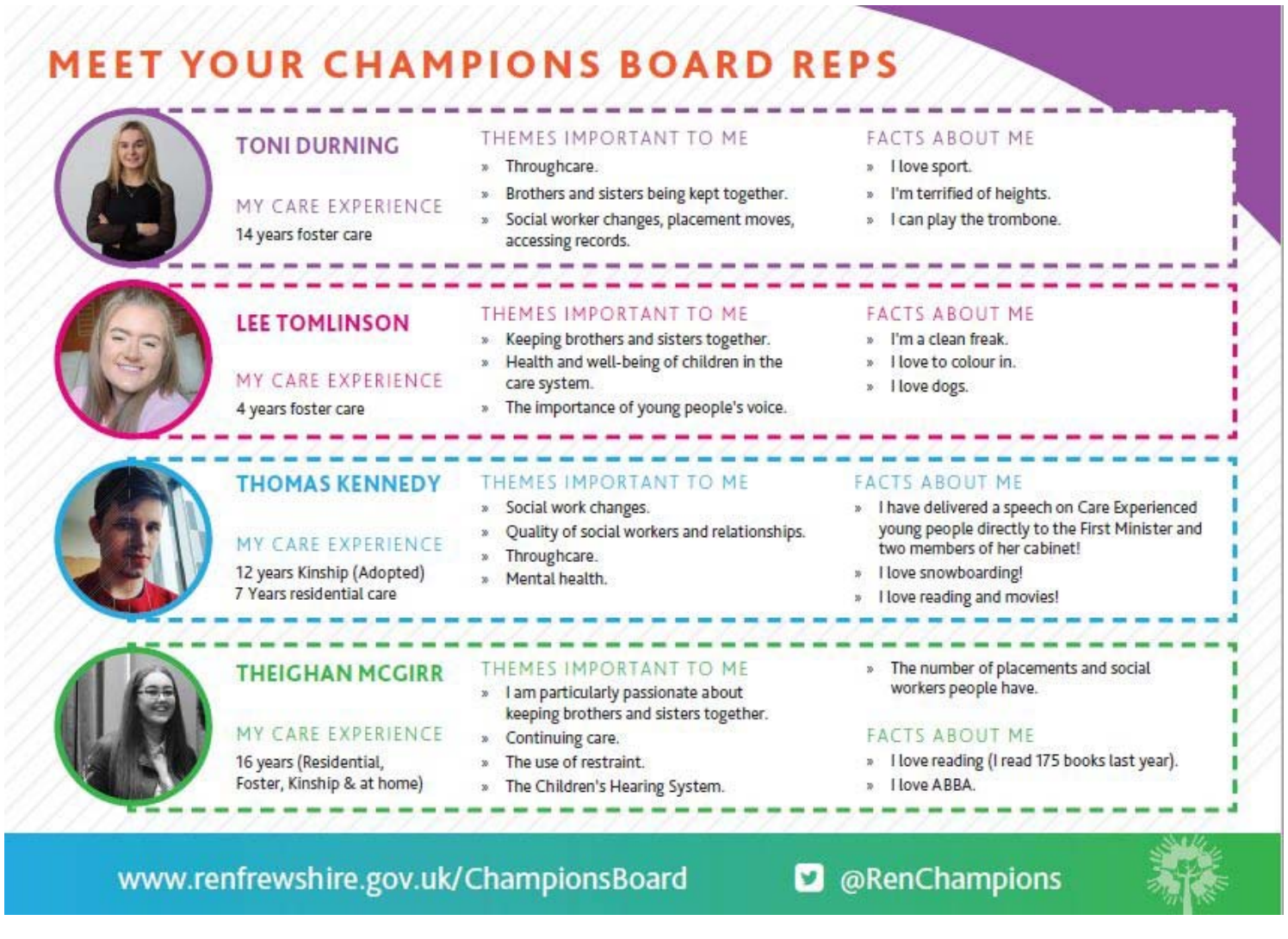
1. Introduction to Champions Board

The Champions Board is a group of Care Experienced young people that meet to improve the experiences of children and young people who are also Care Experienced. We have grown up living in various types of care placements, such as Foster Care, Residential Care, Kinship Care or having a social worker and living at home. We know how it feels to live away from family and have experienced a lot of what many Care Experienced children and young people across Renfrewshire are feeling right now.

We want to hear the important thoughts and views of Renfrewshire's children on different themes. We then want to represent the views shared with us and amplify their voices by talking to decision makers within the council about what we have heard or been told. Ultimately, we want to make things better for Care Experienced young people across Renfrewshire.

The first theme we as a Champions Board chose to work on was keeping brothers and sisters together. We have either all experienced being split up from our brothers and sisters or have been lucky enough to stay with our brothers and sisters and are passionate about others being able to have what we had. This is a theme that is very important to each of us.



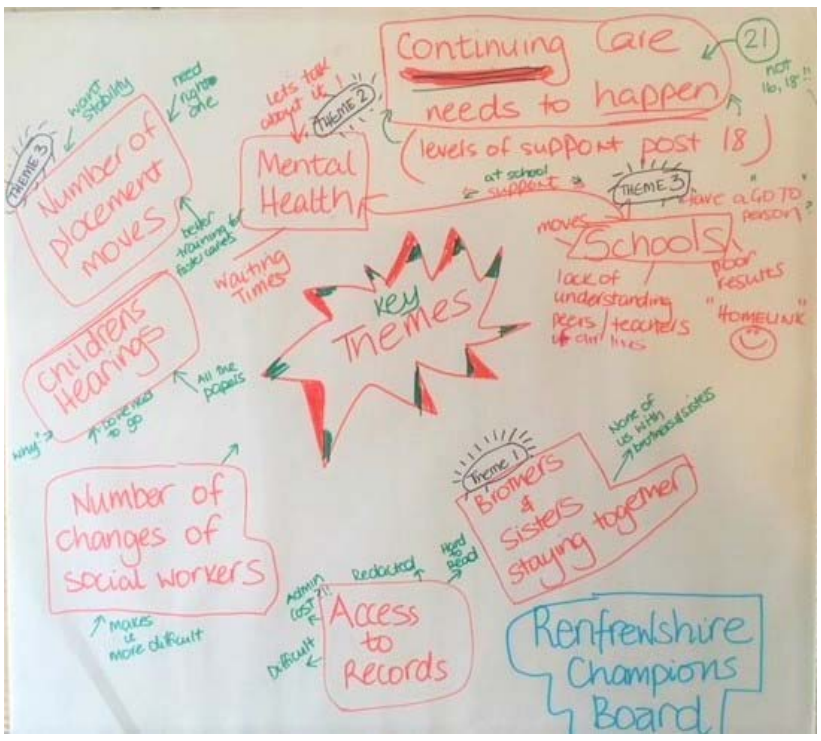
2. How We Picked The Theme

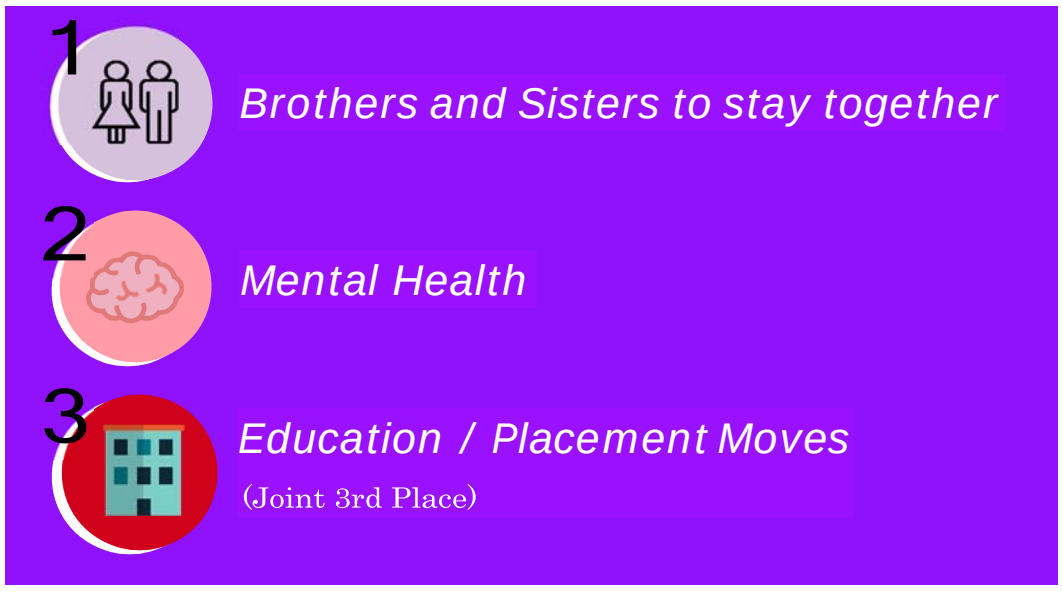
The newly established Champions Board group came together for an overnight residential in September 2019. This time together enabled us to get to know one another a bit better and provided the necessary space for us to explore, consider and deliberate on the themes we collectively wished to start working on.

We took part in an activity that required us to reflect on our own care experience and to identify any themes we felt should be the focus of the group's attention.

To give a broader perspective, we viewed the findings of the 'Care Questionnaire' 2017 which reflected the views of a further 59 care experienced young people from across Renfrewshire. Additionally, data extracted from the last 5 years of Who Cares? Scotland advocacy liaison reports pertaining to the most commonly requested advocacy themes where provided to us to review.

After much conversation and consideration, we collectively decided on the themes below and ranked them in order of importance:





3. Impact on Short/Long Term Health

As a group we discussed, researched and reflected upon the impact sibling separation can have on children and young people's mental health. Research across the board, clearly shows that sibling separation has a massive detrimental effect on mental health compared to those brothers and sisters that are kept together. Please see below some of our own thoughts and experiences:

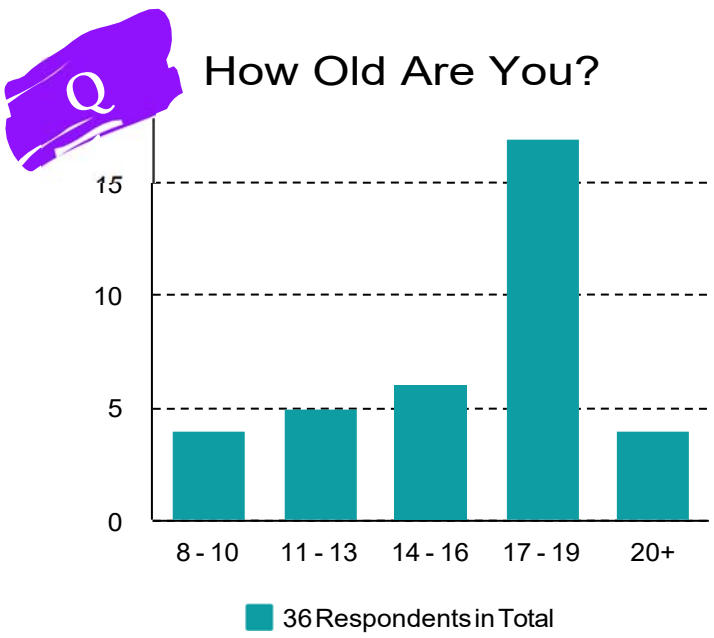
Short Term Impact of Separation:

* Experiencing the trauma of separation
* Negative impact on mental health
* Isolation
* Loss of support from a brother or sister, shared experience
* Emotional Distress
* 'Imaginary friend' - personal reflection from Theighan of how her younger sister thought she was her imaginary friend following their separation at a young age
* Impact on relationships with brothers and sisters i.e. massive difference between living with your brother and/or sister and instead seeing them once a week
* Mistrust of professionals
* Grief & Loss

Long Term Impact of Separation:

* Impact on lifelong relationships, a higher risk of brother and sister relationships deteriorating over time and becoming estranged
* Negative impact on wider relationships in general, leading to attachment issues
* A lost sense of identity once the family unit is fractured
* Developmentally - 'How do I be sister or brother if I've not had the chance to because we were split up?
* Avoidance of conversations / situations involving shared personal details re. family dynamic. i.e. it's easier to say I don't have a brother / sister than try to explain I have family but I don't see them
* Questioning self-worth
* Lost sense of identity i.e. memory of people, family history etc
* Lost memories
* Unresolved truama and pain
* High end ACES

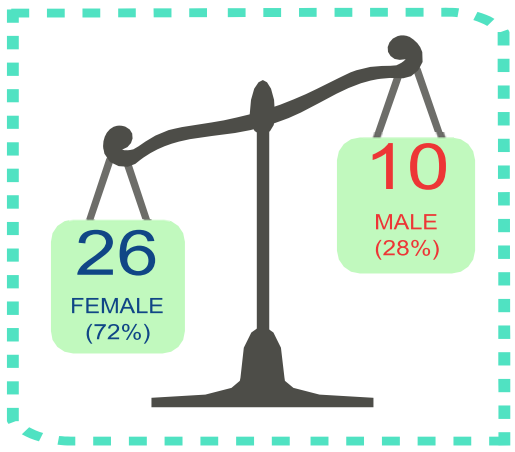
4. Survey Data / Results



Comments on Age:

- Collectively we were happy that there was representation from each of the age group categories within the survey. However, the limited uptake of only 36 participants was very disappointing, given how widely it was promoted across each of the area teams.
- We wondered if the limited uptake possibly because social workers/other supporting adults thought this would be a difficult topic for younger young people to discuss?
- In the context of Psychology surveys, where the data is statistically analysed, a LARGER sample size is desirable so the data is generalisable to the rest of the population. However, with customer service surveys for example, the survey still gives you valuable answers without having a sample size that represents the general population. We feel that this survey can fall under the "customer service survey". We are basically reviewing the care system and the practises within it so I'm not too concerned about the number of responses.

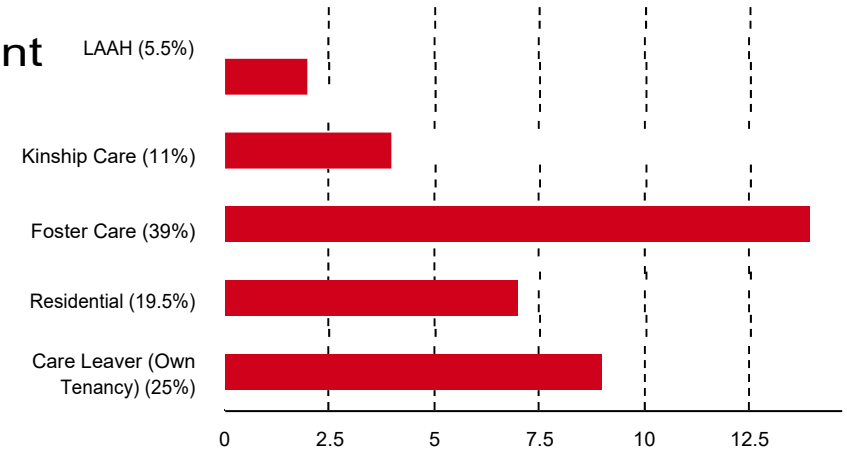
Are You Male Or Female?



Comments on Gender:

- We were not overly surprised by the increased female uptake of the survey as they felt that females would probably be more likely to complete the survey
- Whilst it would have been good to have a greater male involvement, we are content that there is sufficient male representation within the survey.

Which Placement Are You In Just Now?



Comments on Placement Type:

- Importantly, there was representation and voice from all of the placement types included within the survey.
- We would have liked to have captured a wider perspective from those young people living within LAAH and Kinship placements, as we feel that they are a population who are harder to reach
- From the outset, we felt the success of survey would depend upon it being introduced by someone holding an established relationship with each young person as opposed to a leaflet drop. Hence why it was clearly highlighted and promoted at each of the area team meetings.
- We felt that the spike in participation from young people in foster care was interesting and quite possibly linked to the supportive relationships held with their carers promoting the survey.
- There is learning from our first survey, we would like any future survey to come with the caveat that every social worker supports at least one of their young people to complete it.

39%
of participants
currently live in Foster Care

Looked After At Home and Kinship Care placements combined only accounted for 16.6% of responses..

Q

Do You Have Brothers And/ Or Sisters?

34 2

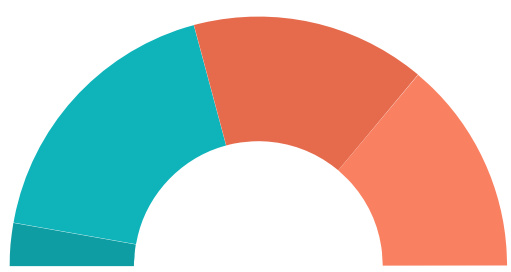
Comments on Number of Siblings:

95% of young people who responded had at least 1 sibling.

- The high number of respondents with siblings highlights that this theme impacts upon the majority of the care experienced population across Renfrewshire. Whilst 2 participants did not have any siblings, views gave a valuable perspective related to future priorities of the Board.

Q

How Many Brothers And/ Or Sisters Do You Have?



61% of respondents had 3 or more siblings. 30% had 5 or more.

- The significantly high number of young people with 3 or more siblings should be explored further by decisions makers and highlights the need for a new approach in how the Authority keep larger family groups together.

- The group felt it would be interesting and important to know the percentage of families accommodated by Renfrewshire Council over the course of a year, in order to have a sense of scale of this.

Have You And Your Brothers And Sisters Ever Lived Apart?

82%

of participants

with brothers and sisters (28) said they had experienced separation from their siblings.

18% (6) had not experienced sibling separation.

Comments on Living Apart:

- Given the small sample size it was felt that this was a high and very telling statistic. We felt this highlighted the potential scale of this theme and of the numbers of young people who have been impacted by it.
- Based on our calculations and a sample size of 28 participants who have experienced sibling separation, it could be estimated that at a minimum, 84 young people are directly impacted. This number rises starkly when you consider the worst case scenario.
- We felt that where brothers and sister have been separated, that it should continually be reviewed and not be a static decision but be regularly reviewed and almost an expectation that they are reunited at the earliest opportunity.
- We would be keen to understand the Authority's views on the short and long-term effects of sibling separation.

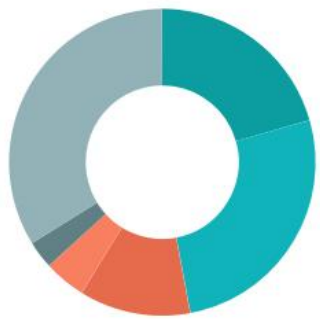
One of our group members shared her experience of living with two brothers from the same family group (not her own) but at separate periods of time. She lived with one brother for a period of time who then moved on, and the other brother moved in some time later. The younger brother later asked her what it was like living with his older brother. He had no point of reference or previous experience that he could remember of staying with his brother.

Do You Currently Stay With Your Brothers And Sisters?

79%

of participants

do not currently stay with their brothers and sisters



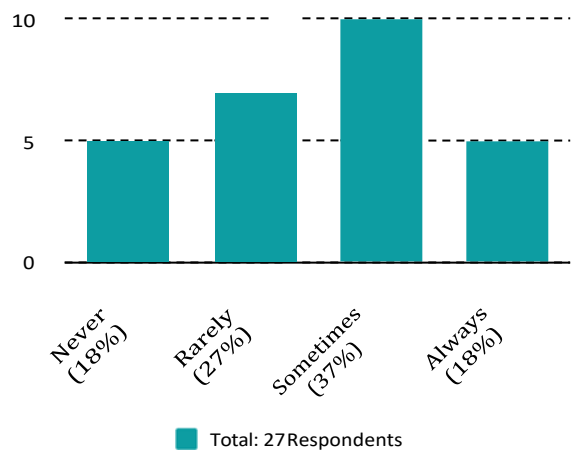
Comments on Currently Living Apart:

- We considered the impact sibling separation can have on individual identity i.e. it can be very painful knowing that you have a brother or sister in the world who you have no connection with because of a decision that was made in the past. One of our group members shared that when she talks with friends about her family that it was easier just to say she has no brothers or sisters than to explain her sister was adopted. Over time, this can lead to a sense of guilt, frustration, anger and low sense of self.

- For transparency, in some cases participants reported staying with brothers and sisters as well as being separated from others. In this instance, their score was split in half so the number tallied up to 34

- Whilst a number of participants indicated that their brothers and sisters lived by themselves, we decided to include them in the overall 79%, as we know that care experienced young people largely move towards independence well before their non care experienced peers. The average age of leaving home in Scotland is 25yrs, compared to 16-18yrs for care experienced young people.

Q If You Answered No to Q7, Do You Get To See Your Brothers And Sisters As Often As You Would Like?



82%

responded that they do not get to see their brothers and sisters as often as they would like

Comments on Seeing Siblings:

- Results sparked different responses from the group, for example some members of the group felt that 18% reporting as 'Always' being able to see their brothers and sisters as often as they would like, as really high and positive. Whilst, there was a different response from those facilitating the discussion, they were quite struck and surprised at how low this number was, so there was a real contrast of opinion and interpretation

- Of those that reported 'never' and 'rarely', 66% were age 17+, we would like to understand what this tells us for our care leavers.

- The group felt that the equal number of participants reporting 'Always' and 'Never' being able to see their siblings was quite a contrast - so for every young person that has plenty of time and connection with their brothers and sisters there is one young person who has none. i.e. 50/50.

- An example was shared of when some social workers used to arrange annual family holidays for individual sibling groups who were living apart. Sadly, this is now quite a rare thing. We feel that it is highly probable that such experiences being arranged would depend upon who your S/W is i.e. some go the extra mile and see their job as a vocation compared to others who see it as a job.

- Based upon our own personal experiences, we feel that the quality and frequency of young people seeing their brothers and sisters very much depends on who your social worker is.

How Did It Make You Feel Being Separated From Your Brothers And Sisters?

I was devastated, it has made a big impact on my life and I'm upset with the fact that I won't get to see her until she is 16 years.

It suited me because we didn't geton.

I find it sad but I also find it ok because I can talk about things that they shouldn't hear.

It wasn't a good feeling.

Sad

Upsetting

The separation is hard and relationships have been lost due to the lack of time

Upset but I didn't really know them that well.

Not the best.

When my two youngest brothers got adopted it was really upsetting because we got told we wouldn't be able to see them or contact them until the youngest ones turns 16 years.

Don't really care.

There was so much going on in my life at that time that I didn't pay much attention.

Really sad.

Sad

Sad but when I get to see him sometimes happy and sometimes angry.

It was very difficult and distressing for me, it's hard to build up bonds again with them.

It was difficult as I had no connection with my family.

Horrible, I was the only one who was by myself, so I felt isolated. I was bullied as others didn't believe I really had siblings. I felt resentful to them as they had each other and it had ruined my mental health.

I didn't like it at all knowing we were all going to be separated from each other and I hate that my wee sister is young enough to forget family members who were close to her at birth.

Don't mind it.

I felt like my siblings became strangers when I went to live with a family members, although my relationship with my Dad was ok there was still some strain and we didn't see each other much.

Abandoned.

Lonely and emotional.

It was sad at first but after a while I got used to it but I still get to see my siblings.

Sad

Q1

If Separated, Should Brothers and Sisters Be Supported To Keep Relationships With One Another?

Yes	34
Sometimes	2
No	0

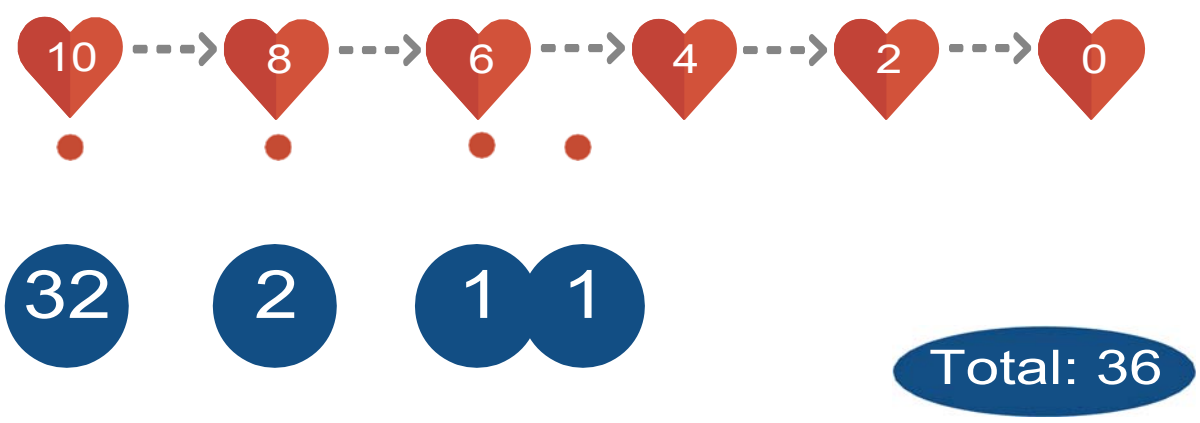
95%

of participants

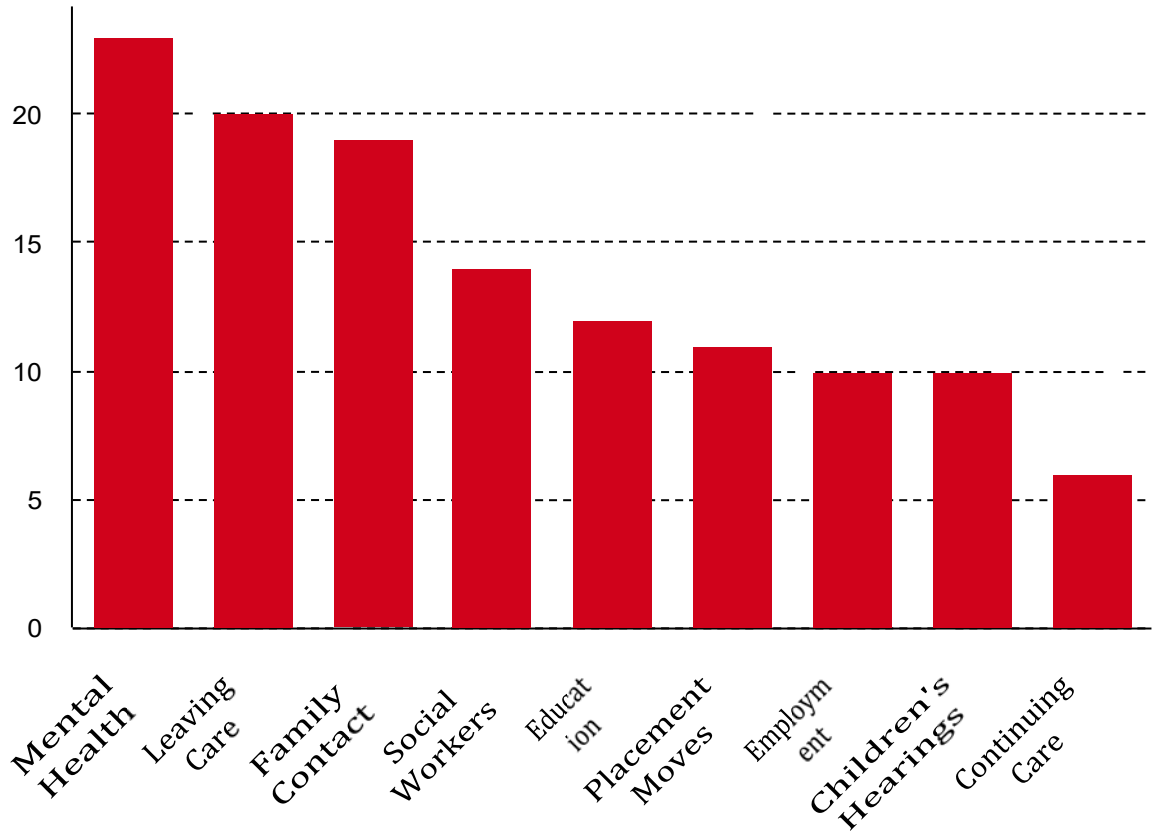
think that separated brothers and sisters should be supported to keep relationships with each other

Q1

How Important Is It For Brothers And Sisters To Be Kept Together When In Care (Score Out Of 10)



What Other Themes Are Important To You That The Champions Board Could Work On To Improve Next?



Comments on Other Themes For The Champions Board:

- Again, whilst we would have liked to have had a greater uptake of the survey to make it even more representative, we recognise that we are now mandated by those that took part.
- Mental Health' was the top scoring theme and is already linked to our current focus of work. We will continue to explore this theme in a broader sense.
- We were a little surprised that 'Family Contact' wasn't the highest scoring theme, however it was suggested that participants may have thought this just meant seeing the parents and didn't include seeing their brothers and sisters. Irrespective, it was still a very high scoring theme.
- We will begin to consider and focus on other top scoring themes such as mental health and leaving care, as soon as there is progress made with the existing theme.

Fina

Any OtherComments?

It's unfair..

When I feel bad my brother always makes me happy and laugh.

I think it's so important for brothers and sisters to stay together in care and not to be separated. It's very daunting having to be in care, especially if you're also having to be separated from your brothers and sisters.

It's just better for siblings to stay together because they are able to support each other when social workers can't.

I wouldn't ever want to be separated from my sister because I love her.

This should be supported for siblings to live together as you are put in care to find a 'family' who love and support you and that you really do have family out there like brothers and sisters

I think it would be very important that brothers and sisters stay together in care to at least try to see how it goes.

5. Recommendations - Ideas

Alternative Care Pilot/Study:

In the spirit of the Independent Care Review (ICR), we would like the Council to launch a pilot project based on the ICR 10 Principles of Intensive Family Support model to keep a family group together.
Longcroft House is a great example of a family recently being kept together, we would like a case study to be conducted to consider any learning, the costings and whether this is a viable model to support larger family groups in staying together? We would suggest that the council do a price comparison of accommodating a sibling group of 5 in a house together versus the same family being separated and going to different foster carers.

Public Pledge Promise:

We would like Renfrewshire Council to be the first local authority to publicly commit to introducing that brothers and sisters will no longer get separated in Renfrewshire and to set timescales for this to be fully implemented.

Policy Change Commitment:

We would like Renfrewshire Council to introduce policy that requires them to officially record

the separation of any brothers and sisters, the reasons for this, and to introduce a mechanism whereby this is automatically regularly reviewed with a view to re-unification.

Mental Health Resource Commitment:

Given the impact that separation from your brothers and sisters can have on both your short and long term mental health, we feel consideration needs to be given to a tailored resource (separate from CAMHS) that is easily accessible for young people to get the support that they need.

Official Review of Separated Brother & Sister Relationships:

The survey revealed that 82% of participants were not happy with how often they get to see their brothers and sisters. We feel that this has to be explored by way of an official review.

6. Detailed Recommendations

#1 Public Pledge Promise

- We would like the council to be the first Local Authority to publicly commit to introducing that brothers and sisters will no longer be separated when they come into care in Renfrewshire. We recognise that this may not happen overnight and will take time to be fully implemented, so we would like a work plan to be devised to map out how this will practice will be concluded with a 50% reduction in numbers over an initial agreed period.

#2 Alternative Care Pilot/Study

- The Champions Board recognise that foster care is not the answer for all family groups that are received into care, and that alternative options are required to keep larger family groups together. Renfrewshire Council have recently demonstrated their ability and desire to keep family groups together by placing one such family group of 5 at Longcroft Children's House.

- The Champions Board would like the local authority to conduct a case study in relation to the Longcroft example and to explore and consider the learning from this. i.e. the associated financial cost, the view of the family had they been separated, the views of the staff group on keeping the family together and whether this could be viable model that could be replicated for future larger family groups coming into care across Renfrewshire.

- As part of this process, we would suggest that a price comparison of accommodating a family group of 5 in a house likened to that of Longcroft, be contrasted against the financial commitment for the same family being separated and going to different foster placements. The outcome of which should be measured against the emotional impact of the family being separated.

- The Champions Board believe that keeping brothers and sisters together is of monumental importance and this too is echoed by Independent Care Review (ICR). We would like to recommend that Renfrewshire Council commit to launching a pilot project that is built upon the learning from the Longcroft case study whilst incorporates the '10 Principles of Intensive Family Support' model as identified within the Care Reviews 'The Promise' report.

#3 Policy Change Commitment

- Whilst Renfrewshire Council works towards ending sibling separation, we would like to request that council introduce a policy that requires sibling separation to be officially recorded along with the specific reasons for as to why. A mechanism should also be devised that automatically ensures that these decisions are reviewed on a regular basis, with a view to supporting re-unification. 82% of participants within the survey who had brothers and sisters advised that they had experienced separation from their siblings. We feel that this is far to high and highlights how widespread

- Leaving your family home and coming into care is a traumatic experience for any young person, coming into care with your brothers and sisters and being separated from them significantly deepens this trauma. Sibling relationships are uniquely strong, especially for young people coming from backgrounds such as ours. Keeping siblings together can massively improve emotional wellbeing, reduce the associated trauma and help them to settle in quicker to their new environment.

#4 Mental Health Resource Commitment

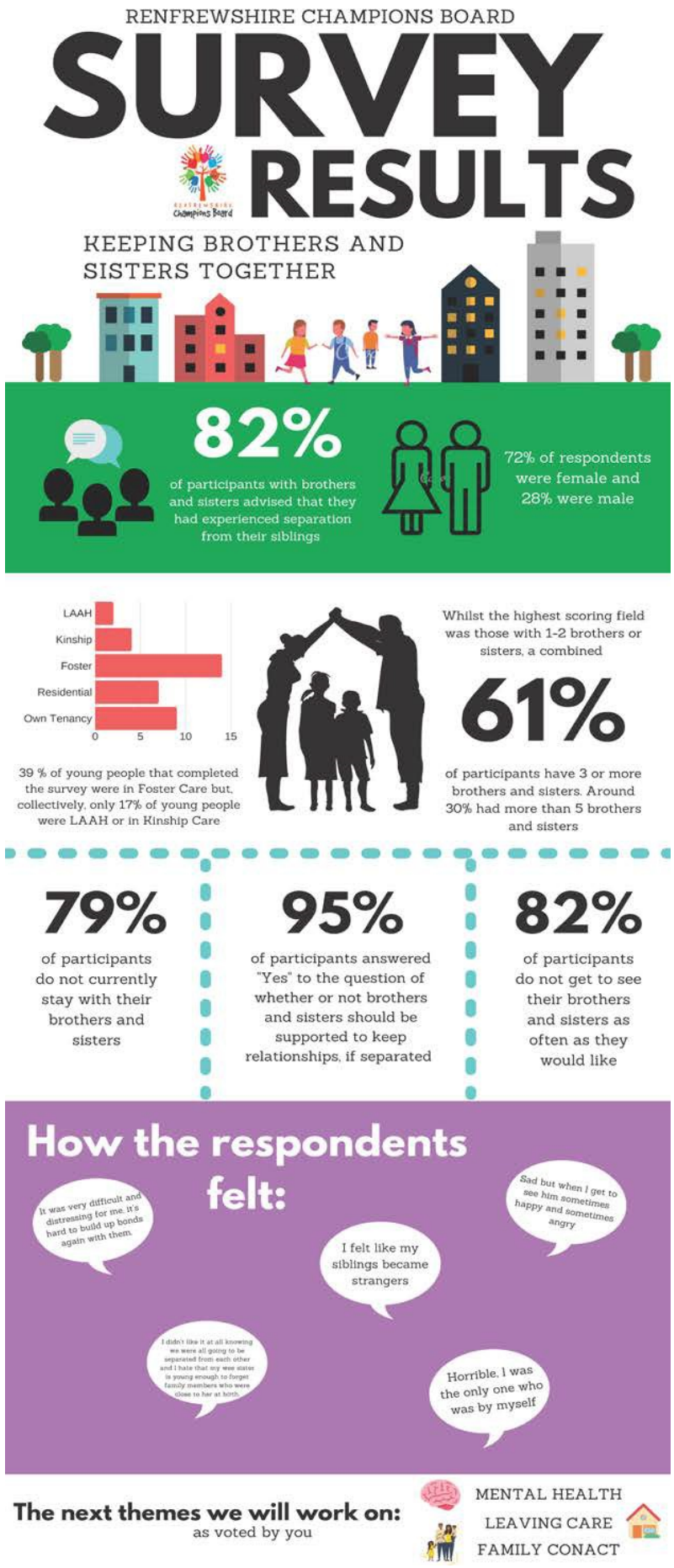
- As a group we know all too well the significant impact being separated from your brothers and sisters can have on mental health, be it through our own experience or that of our care experience friends. Mental health was identified as the top scoring theme for the Champions Board to work on next via the survey, following 20 participants nominating it. However, we feel that sibling separation has a significant impact on both the short and long-term mental health of care experienced young people, that in some cases can have life-long consequences.

- As a result, what we would like to recommend that the council give consideration to commissioning a tailored resource for children and young people across Renfrewshire that is separate to CAMHS. We feel that there is a real need for care experienced children and young people to be able to access mental health support exactly when they need it most and not be required to wait for a prolonged period of time to get the support that they require. We feel that a helpline or dedicated service that can provide immediate support and counselling to our children and young people would be really beneficial and provide a much-needed additional layer of support.

#5 Official Review of Separated Brother & Sister Relationships

In response to the survey we would like to request an official review of the quality of individual contact plans for our young people. The survey highlighted that 18% of participants get to see their brothers and sisters as much as they'd like, whilst a similar 18% of participants have NO contact. In addition, a further 63% indicated that they either 'rely' or only 'sometimes' got to see their brothers and sisters as much as they would like. Ultimately, 81% percent of survey participants indicated that they do not get to see their brothers and sisters as often as they would like.
This is a stark statistic that has shed light on something so fundamentally important to our young people, we feel it is our responsibility to request a formal review to explore this and to consider how this can be made right. The processes behind how sibling relationships are monitored, reviewed and encouraged should also be evaluated. Those young people who have been separated from their brothers and sisters should be supported to maintain healthy, consistent, and lifelong relationships with their brothers and sisters.

7. Infographic



8. Conclusions

Brother & sister relationships are of huge importance to us all, these relationships are integral to who we are and are lifelong. For most of us our first friend is our brother or sister, we learn from one another, we teach one another, we share our lives with one another. The effects of our sibling relationships in childhood echo throughout our lives. This is even more so for those who have had adverse childhood experiences, brothers and sisters in these contexts develop uniquely strong bonds that can prove so vital in overcoming such experiences.

Coming into care is an equally traumatic experience for any young person, but coming into care with your brothers and sisters and then being separated from them by the people that are meant to be helping you is completely wrong and needs to change. We shared earlier with you the short and long-term impact on mental health of those separated from their brothers and sisters, the consequences of which can be felt long into adulthood, we feel this is tragic and needs to change.

As you will know, when a child comes into care, the council becomes their Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term "Corporate Parent" means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by you. The Scottish Government recently stated its ambition "to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families." In the same spirit, we would like Renfrewshire to become the best place in Scotland for babies, children, brothers & sisters and families to grow up and we feel this can be started by keeping brothers and sisters together when they come into care.

We hope you will endorse our recommendations and we look forward to working in partnership with you moving forward to make these a reality.

Yours,
The Champions Board

RENFREWSHIRE
Champions Board

Children's Services - Social Work

Keeping brothers and sisters together policy

Our Pledge

"When children come into our care Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together."

Background

The Independent Care Review highlighted the frequent separation of brothers and sisters in care and heard evidence from care experienced people and professionals about the profound, lifelong consequences this estrangement from siblings causes.

The Care Review Promise states:

> *"Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed. …. There is already the presumption that children will stay together with their brothers and sisters if they have to be removed from their family. This is a significant step in nurturing vital loving relationships. Brothers and sisters keep each other safe and loved. There will be few circumstances where it is not appropriate for brothers and sisters to stay together, but these will be the exception."*

As part of the Care Review's 'Stop: Go' workstream, Renfrewshire committed to STOP separating brothers and sisters unless there are clear safeguarding reasons to do so.

Our Champions Board recently undertook research with local care experienced children and young people and produced a report which detailed experiences of children and young people being separated from their brothers and sisters when they came into care or during their care journey. The Champions Board report spoke about the emotional distress and long-term harm this caused to some young people. This report has strengthened our resolve to get it right for brothers and sisters in care.

This policy sets out the steps Renfrewshire Council will take to ensure that brothers and sisters are kept together. As a service we are committed to ensuring that when a child comes into our care our default position is that we will keep them with their brothers and sisters.

There will be some circumstances where for safety reasons children might need to be placed separately from their brothers and sisters. These circumstances will be the exception and when this happens, we will support brothers and sisters to maintain positive and consistent relationships with each other. We will do this by listening to our children and young people to come up with a tailored and individual plan for them which includes their wishes, aspirations and preferences.

Scotland already has a presumption that children will stay together with their brothers and sisters when they're placed in care. In common with other Scottish local authorities, our approach in relation to this has developed considerably over recent years. The Care

Review, along with ongoing conversations with our Champions' Board, has led us to critically examine our approach and to identify areas for improvement. Renfrewshire can and will do more to ensure that our practice properly reflects the value of family relationships, both as a fundamental right and a source of wellbeing. Moreover, we will establish procedures to ensure rigorous scrutiny of our practice and continuous improvement.

Rights approach

This policy is based on Renfrewshire complying with the Scottish Government's commitment to embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This policy particularly meets the authority's responsibility to meet children's rights under the following:

Article 3 – best interests of the child;

Article 9 – separation from parents;

Article 12 – respect for the views of the child:

Article 20 – children unable to live with their family: and

Article 25 – review of treatment of children in care.

How we define brothers and sisters

Renfrewshire Children's Services recognises the diversity of family relationships and the fact that care experienced children and young people have different biological, emotional and social relationships which they experience as sibling relationships. We also appreciate that many children and young people with an experience of care have relationship networks which are large, diverse in age and spread over multiple households and care types.

Renfrewshire uses the following definition for brothers and sisters:

- Children who share at least one birth parent; and/or
- Children who currently live or have lived together with other children in a family group. This explicitly includes half, step and adoptive brothers and sisters.

Getting it right for brothers and sisters in Renfrewshire

*"All children must be supported to continue relationships that are important to them, where it is safe to do so." (*Care Review 2019)

Renfrewshire Council recognises the fundamental importance of relationships with brothers and sisters for all children and for those with a care experience in particular.

Leaving their family home and coming into care is a traumatic experience for any young person. Coming into care with their brothers and sisters and being separated from them significantly deepens this trauma. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring that these uniquely strong bonds are nurtured and protected for those brothers and sisters that experience separation. We understand that if the relationship between brothers and sisters is not protected, the effects of this can echo throughout their lives, sadly resulting in brothers and sisters who do not have a relationship as adults. So, we therefore

recognise our responsibility in ensuring that the children and young people in our care are supported to maintain regular, healthy and loving connections with their brothers and sisters.

In practice this means:

- Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together, unless there are clear safeguarding reasons not to. This can include being with the same foster carer, kinship carer or in the same residential house.

- Brothers and sisters will not be separated without the express agreement and authorisation of the Head of Child Care & Criminal Justice.

- Before agreeing that brothers and sisters can't be placed together the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice will be made aware of the clear safety reasons as to why keeping them together at this time isn't possible. A report will be provided outlining what actions have been taken to keep the children together.

- Where it is decided that brothers and sisters cannot be placed together, a high-quality assessment will produce an individual plan (leading to a 'Family Time' plan) reflecting how the children will be supported to maintain their relationship with each other. This will be based on the wishes and views of the individual children.

- Where brothers and sisters can't be kept together, we will make sure we minimise the physical distance between where the children are staying, unless there are clear safeguarding reasons not to.

- Where children and young people aren't placed with their brothers and sisters, the "Looked After Review" process will consider whether they still need to live apart at this time. This will be subject to ongoing review and include the views of each of the children. 'Family Time' plans will also be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the needs and wishes of the children in consistently seeing one another.

- Children's services will monitor compliance with our pledge on a regular basis. This will be done by establishing a procedure counting the number of children placed separately from their brothers and sisters and tracking the completion and review of 'Family Time' plans and the recording of the child's views.

- We will provide an annual report to the Champions' Board setting out our progress towards getting it right for brothers and sisters in Renfrewshire.