



Scotland's Equity Toolkit: supporting recovery and accelerating progress



How to use the toolkit

The toolkit contains 16 sections. Each section highlights and directs you to:

- What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?
- Conditions for success and sustainability
- Exemplars
- Useful resources
- Research and articles

Education Scotland has designed the toolkit as a learning resource which will be informed and updated as evidence, research and effective practice emerges. The toolkit endorses key principles and features of the [national model of professional learning](#), and may be used flexibly to support activities including:

- Professional reading and research
- Professional dialogue
- Professional enquiry
- Planning
- Self-evaluation



Please see this [short video](#) for how to navigate the toolkit

The toolkit can be navigated using the buttons located in the header bar of each page.



The individual buttons work as follows:



The 'home' button takes you back to the master contents page for the complete toolkit to allow you to access any section



The 'up arrow' button takes you to the section contents page to allow you to access all content within the section you are using



The 'back' button takes you back one page in the toolkit (this is not the same as the previous page you navigated from).



The 'forward' button takes you to the next page in the toolkit

Symbols



An arrow highlights to click on graphic as there is a direct link within the toolkit to a website, article or document



An open book icon highlights suggested further reading

Scotland's Equity Toolkit: supporting recovery and accelerating progress

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"Education is a universal human right, essential to bridging gaps in human wellbeing, equity and opportunity."

World Economic Forum

Background to the Scottish Attainment Challenge

[The Scottish Attainment Challenge](#) is about achieving equity in educational outcomes. This can be achieved by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched by the First Minister in February 2015. It is underpinned by [The National Improvement Framework](#), [Curriculum for Excellence](#) and [Getting it Right for Every Child](#).

It focuses and accelerates targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The Scottish Attainment Challenge also supports and complements the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 – 2025/2026: The refreshed mission

In November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [set out plans](#) for a refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge from April 2022. The mission of this refreshed Challenge is:

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

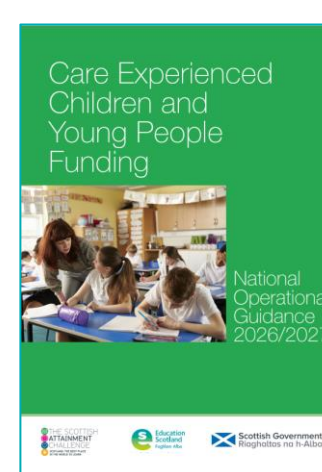
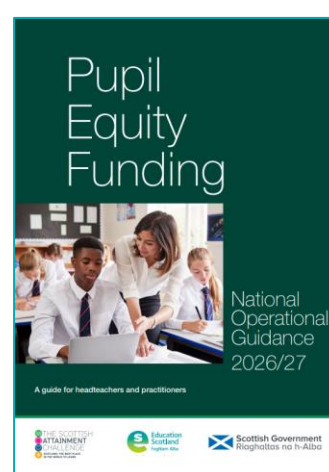
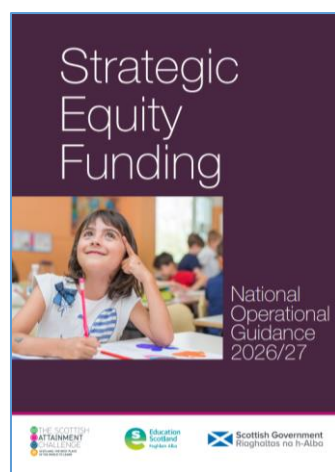
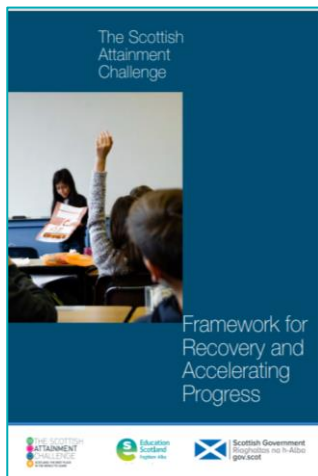
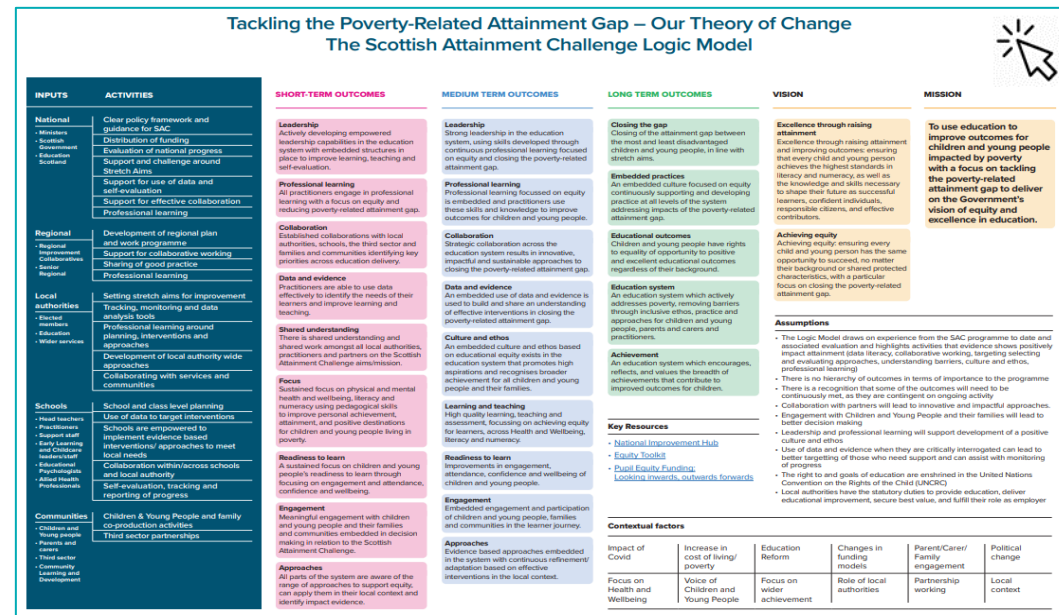
From 2022-23 to 2025-26 the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to support recovery from the pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, whilst raising attainment for all to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty. The next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge builds on the evidence set out in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland [5-year report](#) on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap, the [Equity Audit](#), the [Audit Scotland report](#) on educational outcomes, and the [OECD review](#). It will continue to provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty through funding to local authorities, Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People funding and a number of national programmes.



Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 – 2025/2026: The refreshed mission

A suite of materials and documentation are available to support and guide efforts to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap, including:

- [Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model](#)
- [Achieving Excellence and Equity: 2026 National Improvement Framework](#)
- [Equality Impact Assessment –The Scottish Attainment Challenge - 2022/2023 – 2025/2026](#)
- [Attainment Scotland Fund Evaluation: Thematic Evaluation Summary Report 2024](#)
- [Attainment Scotland Fund Evaluation: Summative Report 2026](#)



Scotland's Equity Toolkit in context - Policy

The following information sets out the current policy landscape in Scotland and the overarching vision for recovery from COVID-19.

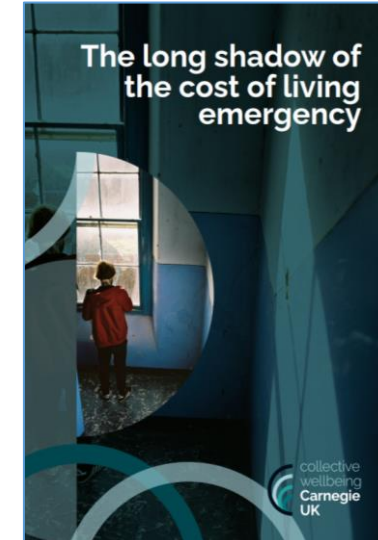
The [Covid Recovery Strategy, overview of activity and next steps report \(2024\)](#) identifies and captures key learning from the implementation of the strategy to inform future approaches to public service reform. This includes actions to address systemic inequalities made worse by the pandemic, progress towards a wellbeing economy, and accelerating inclusive person-centred public services.

Before the pandemic more than one million people were living in poverty in Scotland, including around 240,000 children (two thirds of children in poverty living in a household where at least one person works). People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds were more than twice as likely to be living in poverty than people from a White British background. Existing job market inequalities has intensified with women, disabled people and minority ethnic people (particularly minority ethnic women) facing persistent employment and pay gaps. Those in insecure employment, carers and lone parents, the majority of whom are women, have also experienced disproportionate impacts. These unequal effects of the pandemic on income and employment also have health implications, particularly in the longer term, and will have contributed to health inequalities.

Low-income households with these characteristics are most at risk of being negatively affected by the cost-of-living crisis, which is likely to push many more children and their families into poverty: [Poverty in Scotland 2025 Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#).

Further concerted and targeted action will be required to support individuals, families and sectors most negatively impacted by the [cost-of-living crisis](#).

The national recovery priorities are closely linked to the key principles of the [Christie Commission](#) and can be aligned to the [Programme for Government 2025-26](#). This includes a key focus on eradicating child poverty and ensuring high quality and sustainable public services.



Poverty in context

What is poverty?

Professor John McKendrick in his book 'Poverty in Scotland 2011: Towards a More Equal Scotland' stated "Poverty is about not having enough." (John H. McKendrick; Gerry Mooney; Peter Kelly; John Dickie. 6th Revised. ed. London, Child Poverty Action Group, 2011.p. 18-29). Typically, 'poverty' refers to not having enough resources.

In Scotland (and the UK), income poverty tends to be understood in one of four main ways:

- [absolute poverty](#)
- [relative poverty](#)
- [persistent poverty](#)
- [Severe/ extreme poverty](#)

The interpretation that is used most is relative poverty. Persistent poverty and severe poverty are ultimately different ways of defining relative poverty. Poverty is not the same as income inequality, social exclusion, social justice, multiple deprivation and material deprivation. However, poverty is closely related to each of these issues.

The Child Poverty Action Group produce resources to raise awareness on child poverty and the cost of the school day, which is helpful to support school communities to better understand poverty, financial barriers to education and how they can be reduced and removed. There is further information and resources on the [Cost of the School Day](#) on pages 80 and 81.

There are a number of terms used to describe circumstances of poverty, such as:

[Food poverty or food insecurity](#)

[Fuel poverty](#)

[Digital poverty or digital exclusion](#)

[Rural poverty](#)

[Hidden poverty](#)

[Material poverty or material deprivation](#)

[In-work poverty](#)

[Uniform poverty](#)

[What is poverty? JRF](#)

[What protects people from very deep poverty JRF](#)

[Hidden-Dimensions-of-Poverty-20-11-2019.pdf](#)

[Poverty: Our Hidden Shame?](#)

[Understanding the changing nature and context of poverty in Scottish rural and island communities since 2010.](#)

[Poverty in Scotland 2025 JRF](#)



Poverty in context

Interrelating factors of poverty

“Any family can experience hard times and find it difficult to make ends meet. Life changes such as unemployment, illness or family separation can significantly impact our circumstances. Increasing costs, especially for essentials such as food, housing and fuel, affect most people. Poverty isn’t something that happens to others, it can happen to almost anyone. But certain groups of people face a much higher risk of living in poverty than others” ([Who is at risk of poverty? | CPAG](#)).

Lone parent families, black and minority ethnic groups, children in larger families, individuals living with a disability, pensioners, women and people in households where no-one works are more likely to experience poverty, to remain in poverty for longer and to experience deeper poverty, than others ([Poverty & Inequality Commission \(povertyinequality.scot\)](#)).

The report, “[Intersectionality: Revealing the realities of poverty and inequality in Scotland](#)” uses an intersectional lens to better understand the nature of poverty and inequality in Scotland.

The level of vulnerability of an individual or group is determined by their ability to anticipate, cope with, respond to, and recover. Key factors contributing to people’s vulnerability can include:

- The social, political, economic, security, and environmental context in which people live
- Their economic status, skills and experience, gender, age, disability, and ethnicity
- The levels of marginalisation they experience
- The location of where they live and pursue their livelihoods

Poverty in context

Framing poverty

“Framing means making deliberate choices about how you communicate. It’s about understanding how people think and feel, and telling stories that change hearts and minds” The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) conducted research to understand the public’s opinions of poverty to talk about poverty in a different way. Information is presented in the [Framing Toolkit](#) to explain what framing is, why the JRF are using it, and how to collectively put it into action.



“Framing is about finding a balance between authenticity, authoritativeness and appropriateness.”

“It bridges the gap between research and lived experience of poverty.”

“A big part of framing was to connect my story to more widespread structural issues.”

Defining equity

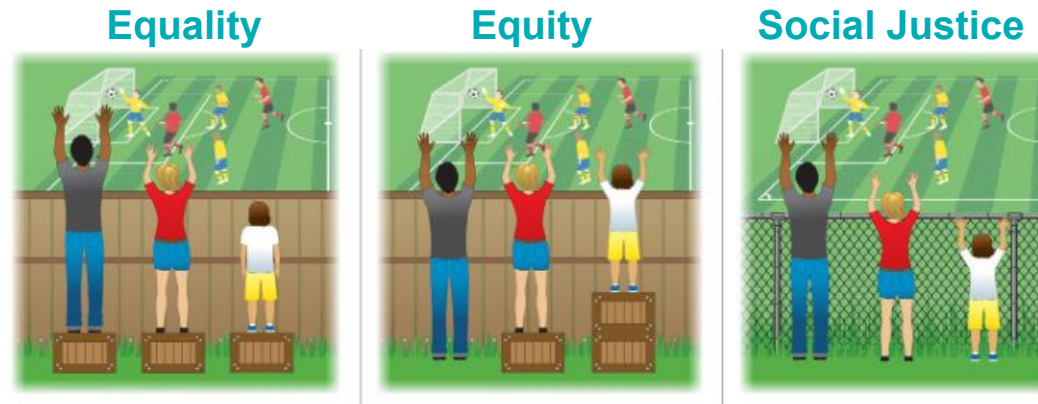


Image source: Environmental Equity Vs. Environmental Justice: What's the Difference? — MobilizeGreen

Defining equity:

Equity is a policy concept and approach that means treating people fairly, but not necessarily treating people the same.

Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances are not obstacles to achievement and that all children and young people are well supported and have the same opportunities to succeed.

Within the context of the Scottish Attainment Challenge this relates to disadvantage arising from poverty.

Purpose of the toolkit

Supporting recovery

Reflecting on evidence about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on learners and their families heightened the moral imperative to support recovery.

- [Institute of Fiscal Studies \(IFS\) \(2020\)](#) and [Sutton Trust \(2020\)](#) found the time spent each day learning at home during COVID-19 school closures was significantly related to family income, with those from more affluent families reporting they were spending more time studying. This was supported by IFS data reporting similar patterns regarding engagement online and in secondary schools, the submission of completed work online.
- Sources from [Unesco, Unicef and the World Bank](#) and the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) advised disruptions to instructional/teaching time in the classroom can have a severe impact on a child's ability to learn. The longer marginalised children are out of school, the less likely they are to return. Children from the poorest households are already almost five times more likely to be out of primary school than those from the wealthiest.
- Black (2020) stated that "inequalities in literacy and numeracy among younger children are the foundation for the attainment gap in qualifications seen in older pupils" and "these inequalities in education are a product of wider socio-economic inequality: inequality that is already proving to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis."
- [Chapman \(2020\)](#), [Sahlberg \(2020 a, b and c\)](#) and [Netolicky \(2020\)](#) all make the case that the pandemic has placed a greater emphasis on equity.

Accelerating progress

Reflecting on the evidence from the recent review, evaluation and reports referenced previously, some key considerations can be drawn:

- Progress in tackling the poverty-related attainment gap was made before the pandemic. This provides solid foundations on which we can seek to accelerate both recovery and progress.
- The findings of the 2021 [Audit Scotland report](#) highlighted a need to make quicker progress even in relation to pre-pandemic gains, and to tackle variation in outcomes between and within local authority areas.
- There is a need for continued and accelerated progress to address the negative impact of COVID-19 on children's health and wellbeing and learning.
- Improving leadership, learning and teaching and the quality of support for families and communities and targeted support for those impacted by poverty remain the key levers to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Purpose of the toolkit

What is it?

Scotland's Equity Toolkit: supporting recovery and accelerating progress is

- An **accessible, live resource** that has been shaped by practitioners to support the **refreshed mission** of the Scottish Attainment Challenge with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap
- **Information and links in one place** signposting practitioners to what can be done and the conditions required for success throughout the learner journey
- **Material that can be used and adapted** in a range of settings to ensure every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed

Who is it for?

Stakeholders involved in improving outcomes for children and young who are most impacted by poverty such as:

practitioners

school leaders

local authority staff

third sector partners

youth workers

Why now?

To have **one place** to go to - There is a lot of information in the system already, which can feel overwhelming and at times difficult to navigate to the answers being searched for.

To **simplify the search** – Through streamlining content within relevant section headings and importantly, identify the conditions contributing to success in one place.

What can it be used for?

To support practitioners in their practice and decision making by providing access to a range of evidence, research and practice.

Professional dialogue to support **planning and evaluation** of Attainment Scotland Funding, considering information to guide **implementation and sustainability**.

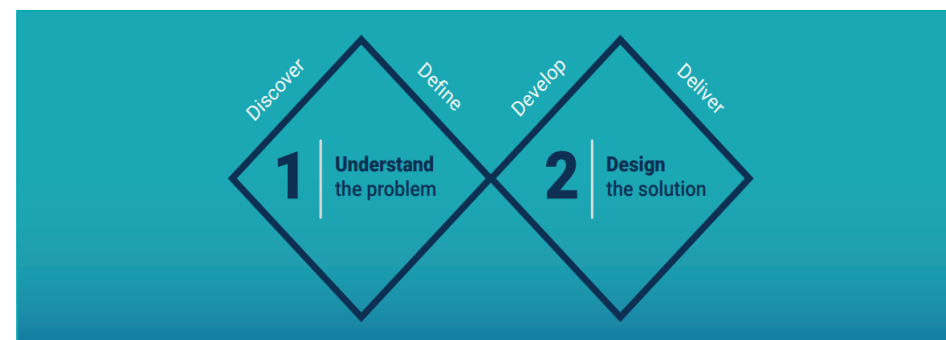
Purpose of the toolkit

Service design

To ensure Scotland's Equity Toolkit is representative of the needs of practitioners to support recovery and accelerate progress, the resource has followed a service design approach. [Service design](#) follows an iterative process to ensure a well-thought out and considered approach to develop and deliver a differentiated and effective resource. This resource was initially developed as a prototype or DRAFT version, to test with the system and achieve feedback on its purpose, functionality, content, fidelity and intended impact.

The first step was to gain a clear understanding of the context, structure and aims of the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge to make sense of data gathered and achieve actionable insights to establish system-wide needs of practitioners. This involved large-scale research and mapping of evidence and resources to synthesise themes and associated information. It is recognised Scotland's Equity Toolkit will not provide everything practitioners require to support learners affected by poverty but provides a targeted focus on equity as a stepping stone to other avenues.

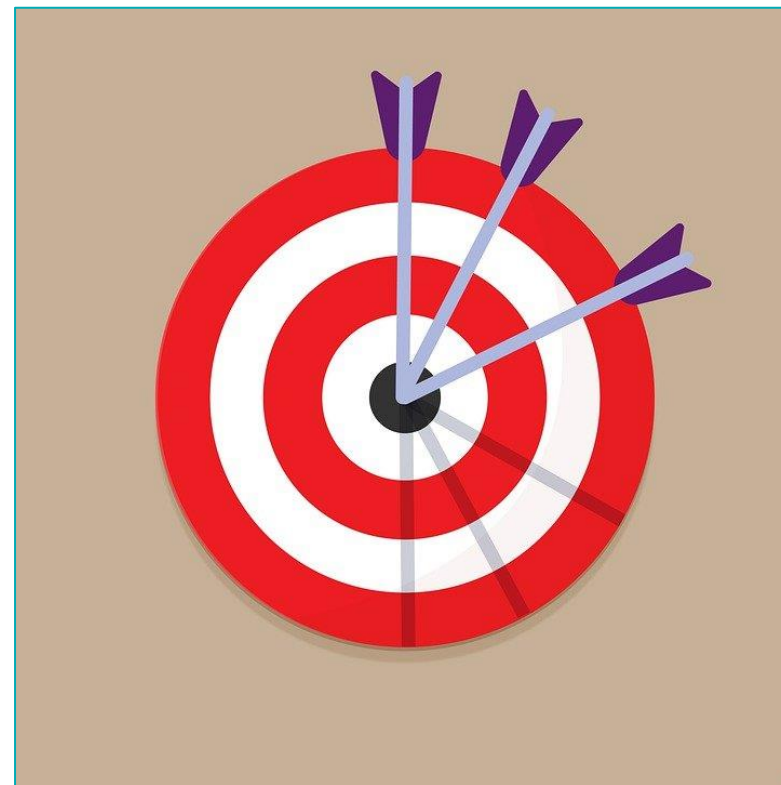
The involvement and engagement of stakeholders was essential in developing Scotland's Equity Toolkit from a prototype to 'final' product. As part of this process, stakeholders were invited to participate in a public consultation in 2022. The range of responses were reviewed and converted into necessary improvements, with the toolkit relaunched in spring 2023. There is an ongoing feedback loop with stakeholders to continue shaping the resource and its content.



Aims of the toolkit

The information in the toolkit is based on data, evidence, research and practice about what has happened when particular approaches have been used in schools and other settings. The aims of the toolkit are:

- Increase awareness and understanding of approaches which support equity and support sustainability;
- Increase access to high quality information for practitioners to inform support for children, young people and families impacted by poverty through an equity lens;
- Increase the pace and consistency of progress by reducing variation in outcomes through guiding complex change and effective implementation of equitable approaches;
- Enhance continued support for recovery from COVID-19 on children and young people's health, wellbeing and their learning through equity-informed practice.



Learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment

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Learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment

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Section overview - Pedagogy

In this section we aim to provide guidance and support relating to learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment. Consideration is given to what we can do to support recovery and accelerate progress, and the conditions for success and sustainability.

Exemplars of practice, reflective questions and links to research evidence and useful resources are also provided. Specific sub-sections within the learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum section include:

- Pedagogy
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Health and wellbeing
- Curriculum and Pathways
- Assessment



Pedagogy

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Pedagogy refers to the method and practices of the teacher and to how they deliver the content of the curriculum to the children and young people in their charge. Effective pedagogy considers knowledge of teaching styles and theory to ensure that learning is progressed through high-quality teaching and effective use of ongoing assessment.

The effects of high-quality learning and teaching are significant for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with protected characteristics.

There is a strong consensus from educational research that high performance in education systems is dependent on the quality of teaching.

The Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit highlights the following effective approaches to pedagogy which can be accessed directly at the links below.

- [Metacognition and self-regulation](#)
- [Collaborative learning approaches](#)
- [Feedback](#)
- [Mastery learning](#)
- [Social and emotional learning](#)
- [Peer tutoring](#)
- [One to one tuition](#)

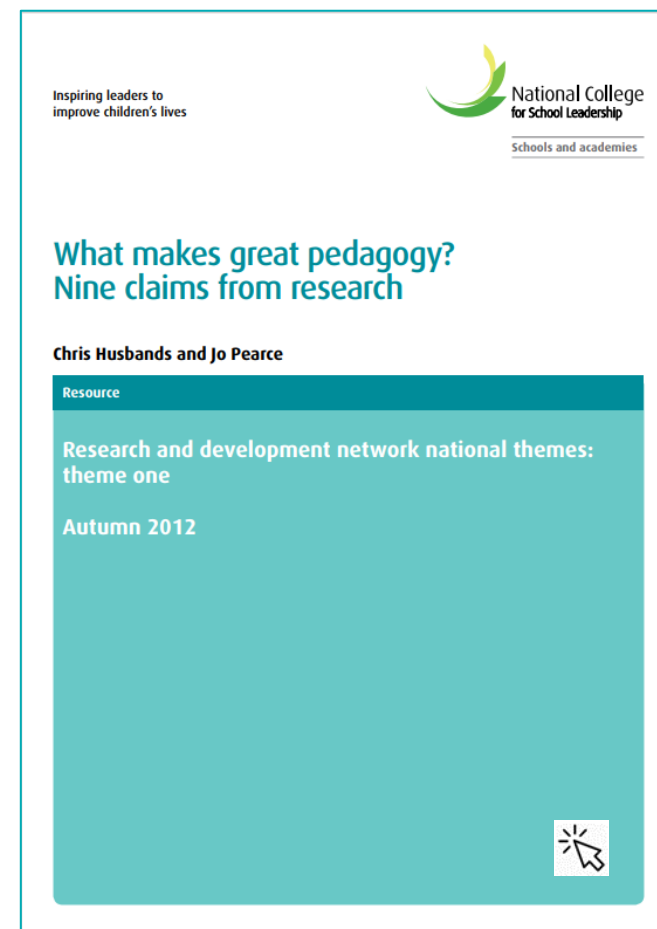


Conditions for success and sustainability - Pedagogy

The national research and development network was created by the National College for School Leadership.

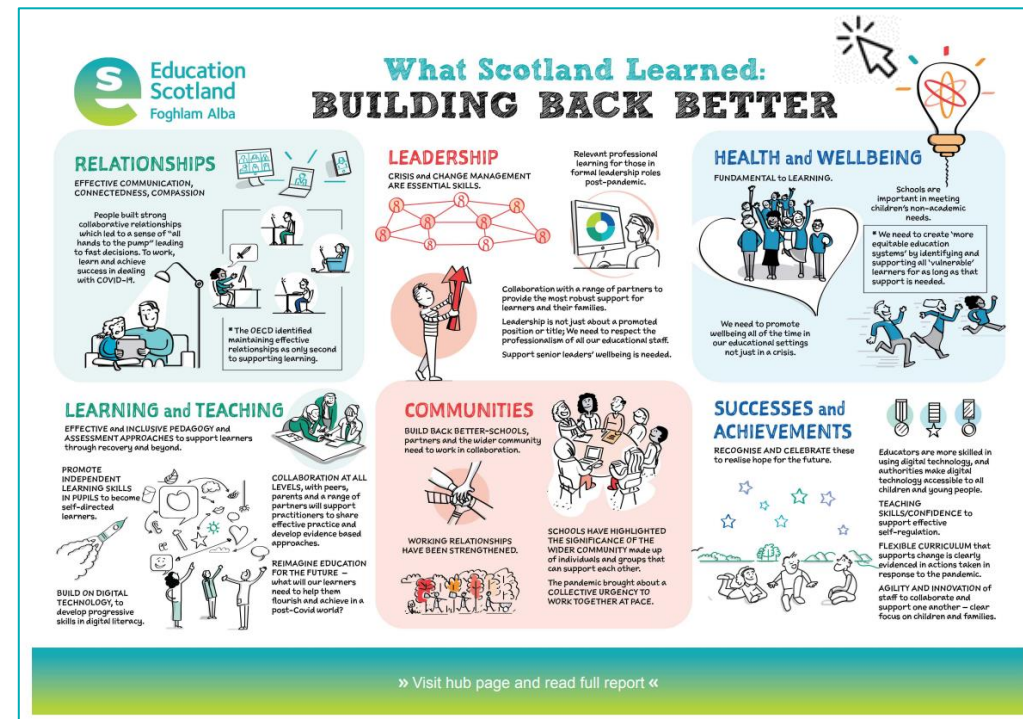
In [this paper](#), research literature is used to advance nine strong claims about the characteristics of highly successful pedagogies:

- Effective pedagogies give serious consideration to pupil voice.
- Effective pedagogies depend on behaviour (what teachers do), knowledge and understanding (what teachers know) and beliefs (why teachers act as they do).
- Effective pedagogies involve clear thinking about longer term learning outcomes as well as short-term goals.
- Effective pedagogies build on pupils' prior learning and experience.
- Effective pedagogies involve scaffolding pupil learning.
- Effective pedagogies involve a range of techniques, including whole-class and structured group work, guided learning and individual activity.
- Effective pedagogies focus on developing higher order thinking and meta-cognition and make good use of dialogue and questioning in order to do so.
- Effective pedagogies embed assessment for learning.
- Effective pedagogies are inclusive and take the diverse needs of a range of learners, as well as matters of student equity, into account.



Exemplars - Pedagogy

- The [Early Level Pedagogy Toolkit](#) aims to support practitioners working with children in the Early Level to appropriately use play pedagogy to support learning and development.
- A resource to support practitioners in professional dialogue and collaborative enquiry on learning through play: [Play2Learn in Bearsden Primary and St Matthew's Primary School, East Dunbartonshire Council \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- An exemplar on [using PEF to advance pedagogical approaches in closing the poverty related attainment gap at St Joseph's Primary, Inverclyde \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



Click on sketch note to view full version

Useful resources - Pedagogy

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence \(scotlandscurriculum.scot\)](https://scotlandscurriculum.scot)
- [The Teaching Cycle - Dundee City Council Pedagogy Team](#)
- [Differentiation Strategies - Dundee City Council Pedagogy Team](#)
- [Education Scotland - Features of Highly Effective Digital Learning, Teaching and Assessment](#)
- [Education Endowment Foundation - Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#)
- [Education Scotland SLF2021 Pedagogy for Equity webinar](#)

Research and professional reading

- [SCDE Attainment Challenge Project: Developing pedagogies that work for Pre-Service and Early Career Teachers to reduce the Attainment Gap in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and wellbeing](#)
- [Action enquiry research focussing on closing the poverty-related attainment gap centred on raising attainment in numeracy and mental health](#)
- [Mastery learning | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)
- [Metacognition and self-regulation | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)
- [Exploring Effective Pedagogy \(pearson.com\)](https://www.pearson.com)
- [What makes great pedagogy and great professional development: final report \(ioe.ac.uk\)](https://ioe.ac.uk)
- [UNESCO - Inclusion and education \(2020\)](#)
- [What Makes Great Teaching - The Sutton Trust \(2014\)](#)
- [An Evaluation of the Attainment Gaps in State Schools in England: Evidence from Next Steps' Age 25 Sweep Dataset](#)

Literacy

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Education Scotland have developed a [National Literacy PLC - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#) within GLOW*. This has links to numerous strategies and resources which can be used to intensify the support for those who need it most due to the disruption to their learning. There are also links to lots of professional learning materials which can support the development of teacher confidence in this area.

There are sections on the following:

- Key documents
- Professional learning and research
- Learning, teaching and assessment
- Blended and remote learning
- Support for National Qualifications
- Supporting additional needs
- Sharing practice

*A GLOW login is required to access the PLC



Listening and talking

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Listening and talking activities, or what the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) describes as [oral language](#), emphasise the importance of spoken language and verbal interaction in learning. Listening and talking underpin learning experiences across the four contexts and have a direct impact on learners' progress in reading and writing. Explicit attention to the teaching of talk in a variety of contexts supports learners' overall achievement and attainment. In addition, adults who are mindful of how to adapt their own language and talk will support learners at the earliest stages of literacy development.

Oral language and interaction skills form the foundation for early literacy development. Research indicates that developing children's listening and talking skills helps reduce the poverty-related attainment gap by improving learners' outcomes across the three curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing'

A pedagogical focus on oral language has been found to have a positive impact on relationships and engagement in learning, as well as supporting self-regulation and metacognition. Equally, less developed communication skills can lead to poorer outcomes in terms of employment opportunities and an individual's mental health and wellbeing.

Further information:

- [Oral interventions – YouTube \(Education Scotland\)](#)
- [Closing the Gap through Listening and Talking Full Webinar – YouTube \(Education Scotland\)](#)
- [Closing the Gap through Listening and Talking – Padlet \(Education Scotland\)](#)
- [Oral language interventions | EEF](#)
- [Oral Language Toolkit | Highland literacy](#)
- [Supporting oral language development - cloudfront.net \(EEF\)](#)

Reading

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Robust oral language skills will support progress in reading. These include a range of underpinning skills such as understanding spoken language, the development of grammar, acquisition of vocabulary and, eventually, the use of appropriate speech sounds. Children need lots of opportunities to hear and to use talk in everyday nurturing and learning activities, including play, exposure to rhymes, stories and books to develop foundations for reading.

Alex Quigley, author of *Closing the Vocabulary Gap* and *Closing the Reading Gap*, shared his thoughts in the webinar on [closing the reading gap, including in the time of the coronavirus](#). He suggests that we need to continue to support children's reading at home. Highlighting the inequity in children's access to texts at home with one in eight children in the UK not owning a single book. We need to take this into account when planning our curriculum and for any further interruptions to learning that may occur. He also explains the importance of teachers understanding what makes reading complex in order for them to select 'goldilocks' texts (just right) for their learners. He outlines what he refers to as the 'arduous 8' which teachers should consider when selecting texts:

- background knowledge
- range and complexity of vocabulary (including word length)
- use of abstract imagery and metaphorical language
- sentence length and syntax
- narrative or whole text structures
- the generic elements of a text
- the scaffolds present or absent in a given text
- text length

Quigley also suggests the likelihood that more onscreen reading during lockdown may have led to more successful reading, and possibly better retention, especially of non-fiction, for more able readers. He explains that more able readers use reading strategies in a systematic way which less experienced readers struggle to do. He suggests the need to support the development of strategic reading by explicitly teaching, modelling and scaffolding the following strategies:

- evaluate task
- skim the text
- scan proper nouns
- activate prior knowledge
- re-read
- link nouns
- predict meanings
- build schema
- explore unfamiliar word parts
- evaluate meaning of punctuation
- clarify and question
- summarise text meaning

Reading

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Studies by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) have found that the explicit teaching of reading strategies is effective in supporting pupils to improve their comprehension of written text. Pupils learn a range of techniques and strategies, such as connecting to prior knowledge, inferring, predicting, summarising, questioning and monitoring understanding. It is important to recognise that young children at an early stage of oral language development, will benefit from adult approaches that can adapt to their language and communication needs. This is particularly important when considering the type of questions adults use.

The [EEF study](#) found that “the average impact of reading comprehension strategies is an additional six months’ progress over the course of a year and can be usefully combined with Collaborative learning techniques and Phonics activities to develop reading skills”.

The report also goes on to consider how the approach could be used to promote equity:

“Studies in England have shown that pupils eligible for free school meals may receive additional benefits from being taught how to use reading comprehension strategies. Many learners will develop these approaches without teacher guidance, adopting the strategies through trial and error as they look to better understand texts that challenge them. However, we know that on average, disadvantaged children are less likely to own a book of their own and read at home with family members, and for these reasons may not acquire the necessary skills for reading and understanding challenging texts”.

Building a literacy rich environment through interactions, experiences and spaces

[Supporting children to develop a love of reading](#)



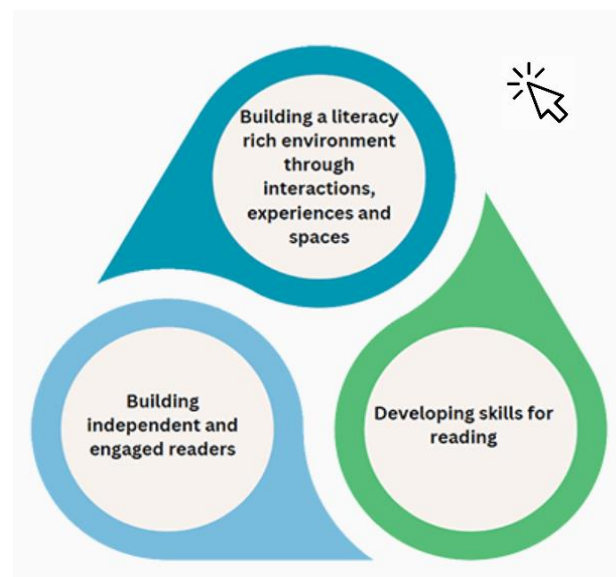
[The importance of oral language for reading](#)



[Developing phonological awareness](#)



[Building concepts of prints](#)



[The importance of oral language for reading - Learning to read in the early years \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Writing

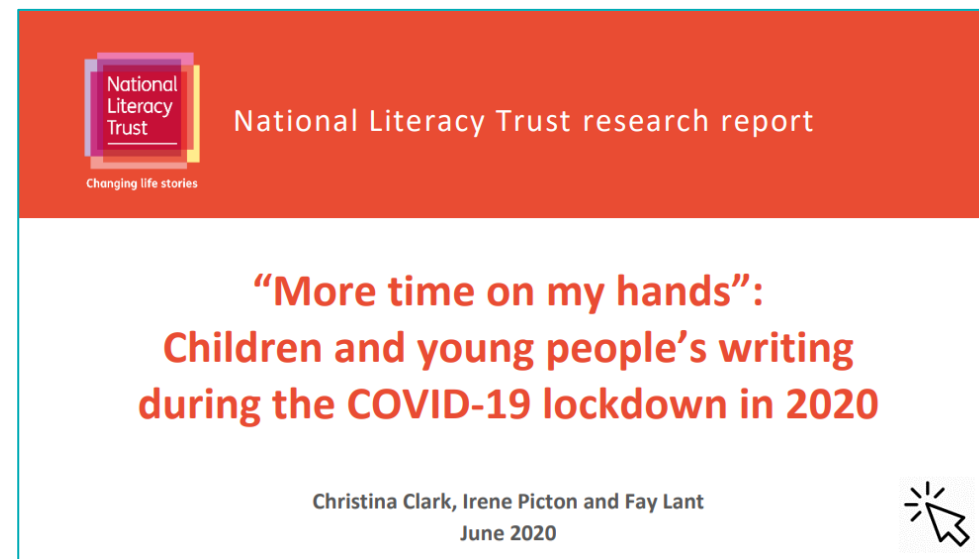
What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Based on their survey "[More time on my hands](#)", Clark et al. (2020) offer the following observations:

In times of continued uncertainty, the essential role of writing as a tool for supporting mental wellbeing should therefore also be recognised and valued.

One particularly clear message from the children's comments was that having more time to write freely has contributed to their increased enjoyment of writing. Looking ahead, it seems that providing time for free writing once back in the classroom could help to sustain this positive outcome. While there may well be a need for a fast pace of learning, balancing this with time for writing that is not prescriptive or exams-focused could be enormously valuable to boost writing enjoyment overall.

Looking forward, we must ensure all children are able to use writing as a means of navigating difficult circumstances that might arise in the future.



Conditions for success and sustainability - Literacy

Emeritus Professor Sue Ellis from the University of Strathclyde highlights the attention to different kinds of evidence in Strathclyde's '3 Domain Model.' This model evidences consideration of the following:

Consideration of all three domains is required if our learners most disadvantaged by poverty and wider inequalities are to progress in their learning.

[Three domains of literacy - Primary Education Network \(nottingham.ac.uk\)](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/primary-education-network/)



Strathclyde 3 Domain Model: a tool to Different KINDS of evidence & pathways

Cognitive knowledge skills, phonological aware; phonic/alphabetic; Decoding cues & strategies, concepts abt print; comprehension skills.

Cultural /social capitals:
home practices, values & beliefs;
funds of knowledge; texts/resources
available; ideas/ experiences/
people/ activities/ home literacies

Personal/social identity:
aspirations; reader
Identity; friendships; view
of self as a reader& how
positioned by others;
entitlement



Literacy - Improving communication, language and literacy in the early years

Seven recommendations for approaches to raising attainment in the early years, sourced from Education Endowment Foundation report on [Improving Literacy in Early Years- Guidance Report](#)

Recommendation 1	Prioritise the development of communication and language
Recommendation 2	Develop children's early reading using a balanced approach
Recommendation 3	Develop children's capability and motivation to write
Recommendation 4	Embed opportunities to develop self-regulation
Recommendation 5	Support parents to understand how to help their children learn
Recommendation 6	Use high quality assessment to ensure all children make good progress
Recommendation 7	Use high quality targeted support to help struggling children



Click on graphic to
access EY Toolkit

Literacy - What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

National Early Language and Communication (NELC) Project

Overview

The NELC project is hosted by NHS Education for Scotland and strengthens early speech, language and communication (SLC) support from pre-birth. It promotes prevention, multi-agency collaboration and equity. The project developed a suite of practical tools and resources, which complement information provided in this section to [create a Language and Communication Supportive Environment in Early Learning and Childcare settings \(education.gov.scot\)](#).

Chatting Together

This includes a set of key messages for supporting early language and communication from pre-birth to age 5. These have been developed based on the evidence of what works and have been tested with parents and carers. The NELC project team has worked alongside national partners to embed these messages within existing supports, such as Book Bug and PEEP: [Chatting Together – National Early Language and Communication Project](#)

GIRFEC My World Triangle and SLC

“Practitioners have a unique opportunity to prevent and intervene early to support SLC development and improve the life chances of Scotland’s Children. Using the My World Triangle, alongside an awareness of protective and risk factors, gives practitioners a familiar framework to consider prevention opportunities based on risk for SLC concerns.”

[GIRFEC My World Triangle and SLC – National Early Language and Communication Project](#)

Early SLC Practice Sharing Storyboards

These storyboards from across Scotland highlight a range of collaborative, evidence informed and outcome focused work which support the SLC skills of children in Scotland from pre-birth to 5. The storyboards are organised under the following 5 headers (based on the 5 primary drivers from [Scotland’s Early Language Theory of Change](#)): Family Support,

Workforce, Environment, Identification and Intervention.

[Early SLC Practice Sharing Storyboards – National Early Language and Communication Project](#)

SLC Knowledge and Skills Matrix

The matrix has been created to support the development of SLC knowledge and skills across the pre-birth to 5 children’s workforce. It identifies the essential knowledge and skills that practitioners across all sectors require within their role to support SLC development for all infants and children. It can be used by individuals for a range of purposes, including reflection on their practice. It can be used by teams to help them reflect on the quality of their environments and promote collaboration around SLC. It can also be used by organisations to support workforce training and development plans.

[SLC Knowledge and Skills Matrix – National Early Language and Communication Project](#)

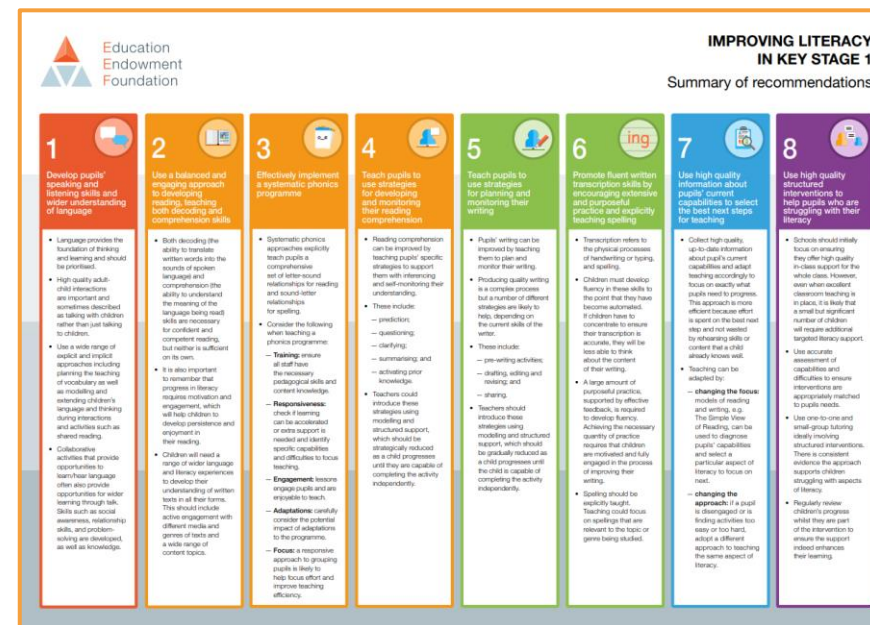
Literacy – Age 5 to 7 years old

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Eight recommendations for approaches to raising attainment in literacy, sourced from Education Endowment Foundation report on [Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1 - Guidance Report](#)

- Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language
- Use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, teaching both decoding and comprehension skills
- Effectively implement a systematic phonics programme
- Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and monitoring their reading comprehension
- Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and monitoring their writing
- Promote fluent written transcription skills by encouraging extensive and effective practice and explicitly teaching spelling
- Use high quality information about pupils' current capabilities to select the best next steps for teaching
- Use high quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy

Examples, explanations, and resources are provided within the report set out in sections of the above recommendations.



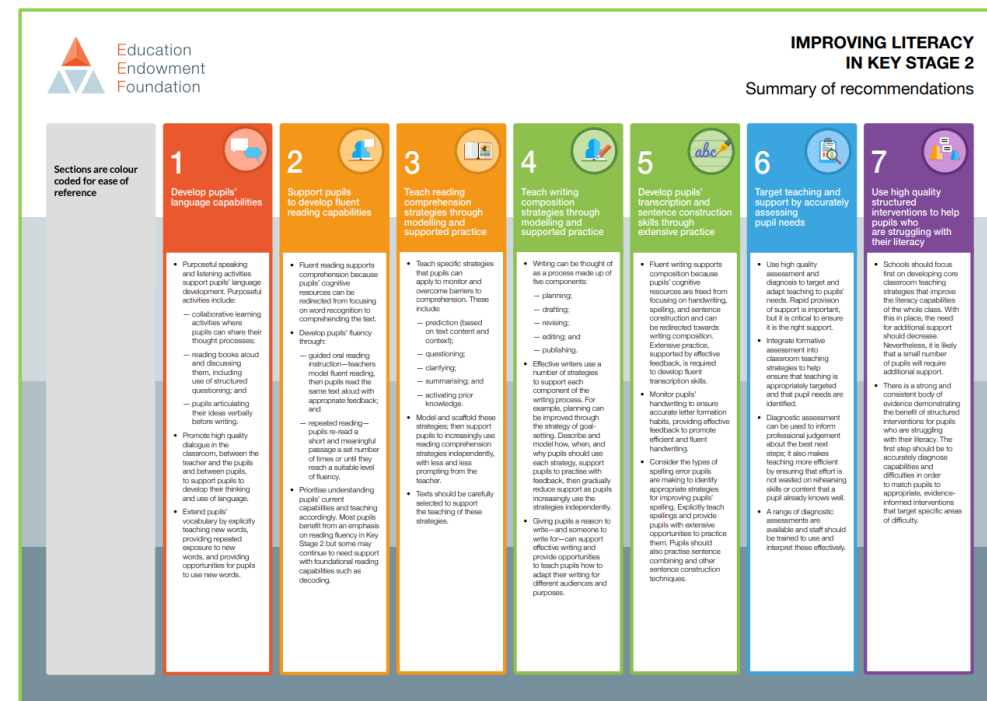
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Literacy – Age 7 to 11 years old

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Seven recommendations for approaches to raising attainment in literacy, sourced from Education Endowment Foundation report on [Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2 - Guidance Report](#)

- Develop pupils' language capabilities
- Support pupils to develop fluent reading capabilities
- Teach reading comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice
- Teach writing composition strategies through modelling and supported practice
- Develop pupils' transcription and sentence construction skills through extensive practice
- Target teaching and support by accurately assessing pupil needs
- Use high quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy



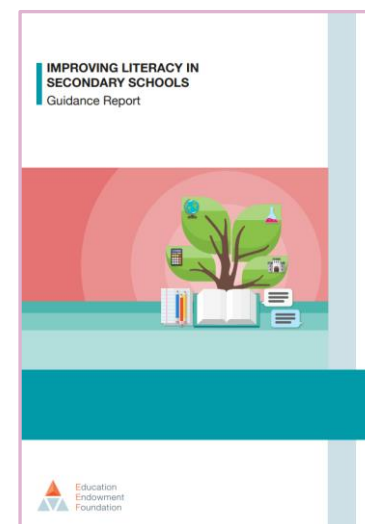
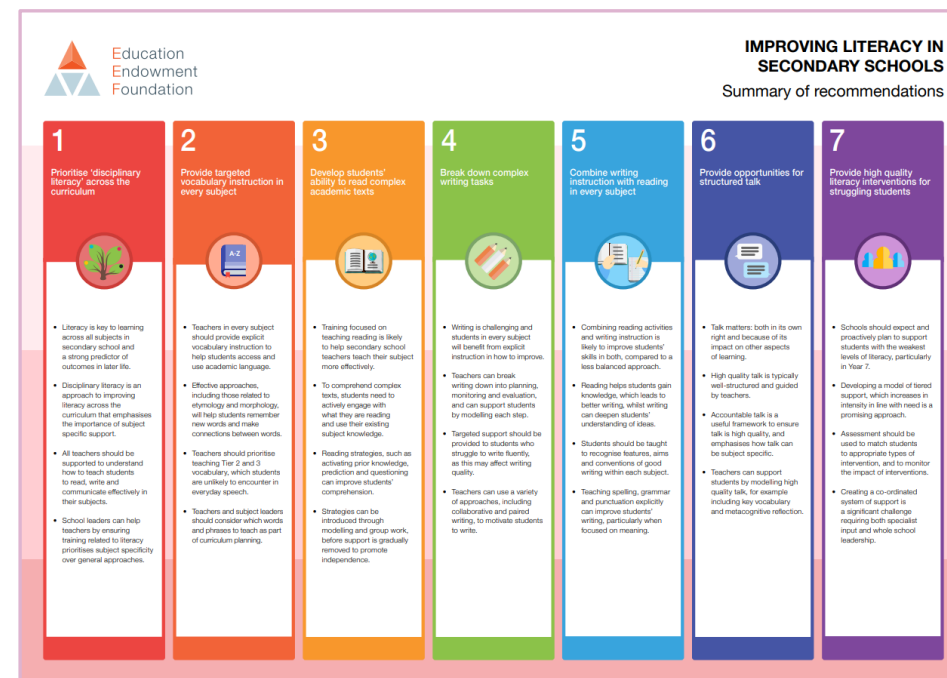
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Literacy – Secondary schools

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Seven recommendations for approaches to raising attainment in literacy, sourced from Education Endowment Foundation report on [Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools - Guidance Report](#)

- Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum
- Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject
- Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts
- Break down complex writing tasks
- Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject
- Provide opportunities for structured talk
- Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students



Click on graphic to access full pdf version

Exemplars - Literacy

- [How can schools develop a literacy-rich curriculum in P1-3 to help to close the vocabulary gap? | Learning resources](#)
- [Support for emerging literacy approaches in Highland | The Highland Council](#)
- [Primary Literacy Coaching Programme in Renfrewshire | Practice exemplars](#)
- [Gathering of listening and talking evidence – Dundee City Council](#)
- [Closing the Literacy Gap in Dumfries and Galloway | Practice exemplars](#)
- [Supporting spoken language in the classroom - University of Bristol](#)
- [Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource \(POLAAR\)](#)
- [Early SLC Practice Sharing Storyboards – National Early Language and Communication Project](#)



Useful resources - Literacy

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Education Scotland Literacy and English Professional Learning Community - DigiLearnScot](#)
- [Closing the Reading Gap – Alex Quigley \(researched.org.uk\)](#)
- [Forth Valley and West Lothian RIC – The Literacy Academy – DigiLearnScot](#)
- [Read with TRUST infographic \(Education Endowment Foundation\)](#)
- [Listening and Talking Evidence - Dundee City Council Pedagogy Team](#)
- [Whole class reading approaches \(theconfidentteacher.com\)](#)
- [Oral language interventions \(Education Endowment Foundation\)](#)
- [Evidenced-based interventions | National Literacy Trust](#)
- [Mediating text difficulty \(alexquigley.co.uk\)](#)
- [Helping home reading - Read with TRUST \(Education Endowment Foundation\)](#)
- [Explicit teaching of phonics \(Education Endowment Foundation\)](#)
- [Reading comprehension strategies \(Education Endowment Foundation\)](#)
- [Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource \(POLAAR\) | Learning resources](#)

Research and professional reading



- [Education Endowment Foundation - Preparing for Literacy Guidance Report](#)
- [Oral Language Support key for COVID-19 recovery - University of Bristol](#)
- [National Literacy Trust - Reading practices under lockdown report](#)
- [2022 Equity for All Publication.pdf \(bettercommunication.org.uk\)](#)
- [The Explainer Series - Centre for Early Childhood](#) - films explaining brain development in early childhood with a focus on the importance of caring interactions between babies, young children and adults. The videos are accompanied by a practitioner guide and science briefings.

Numeracy

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Education Scotland have developed a [Numeracy and Maths Professional Learning Community \(PLC\)](#)* within GLOW. This has links to numerous strategies and resources which can be used to intensify the support for those who need it most due to the disruption to their learning. There are also links to lots of professional learning materials which can support the development of practitioner confidence in this area.

There are sections on the following:

- Key documents
- Professional learning and research
- Learning, teaching and assessment
- Blended and remote learning
- Support for National Qualifications
- Supporting learners with additional needs
- Sharing practice
- Numeracy across learning
- Financial education



[What is working in numeracy and mathematics.](#)

*A GLOW practitioner account is required to access the PLC

Numeracy

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

There is emerging evidence of positive impact reported when:

- Pedagogy ensures children gain a depth of understanding rather than relying on procedures and algorithms.
- Manipulatives are used to support understanding.
- The concrete, pictorial, abstract model is promoted.
- Mathematical reasoning is developed through use of a variety of approaches, for example bar modelling or non-routine tasks.
- Discussion of strategies is encouraged through talking about number calculations.
- The biggest impacts observed are when a school or secondary department work together to review their teaching and learning, plan collaboratively, reflect and review changes.

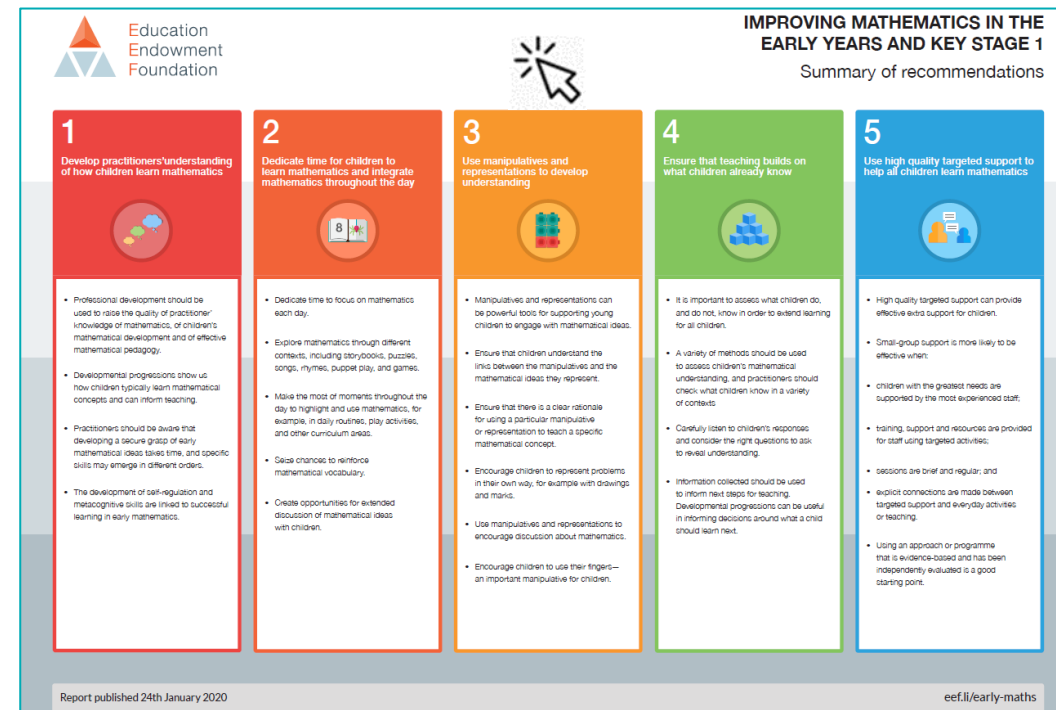
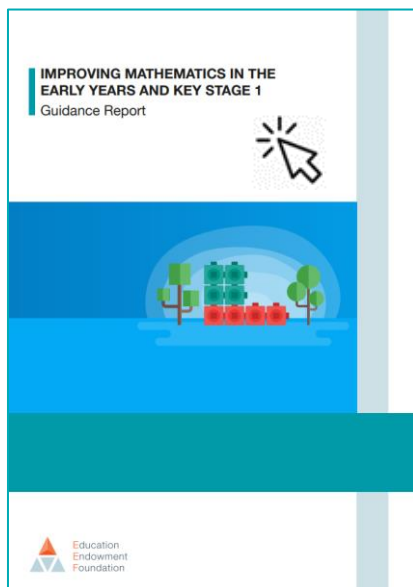


Numeracy

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Five recommendations for approaches to raising attainment in numeracy, sourced from Education Endowment Foundation report on [Improving Mathematics in the Early Years and Key Stage 1](#).

- Develop practitioners' understanding of how children learn mathematics
- Dedicate time for children to learn mathematics and integrate mathematics throughout the day
- Use manipulatives and representations to develop understanding
- Ensure that teaching builds on what children already know
- Use high quality targeted support to help all children learn mathematics

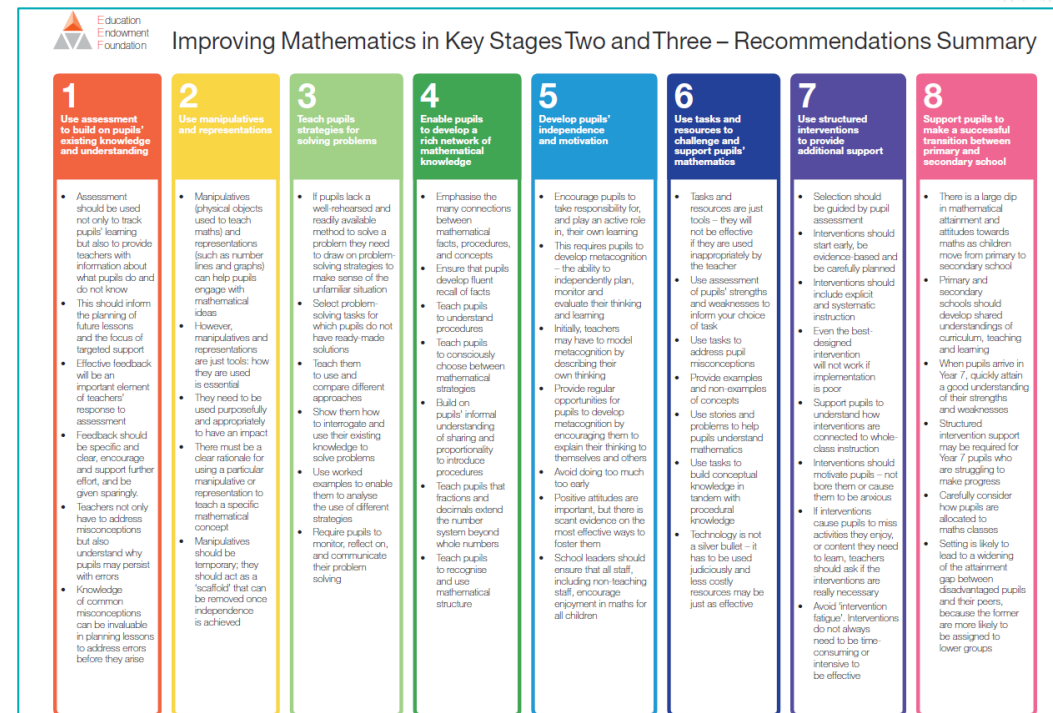
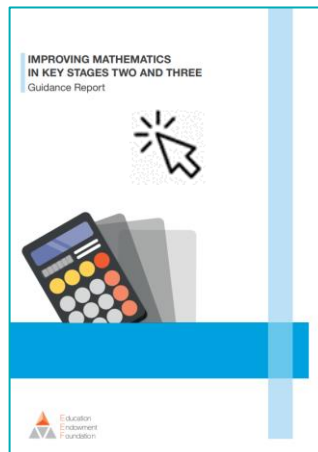


Numeracy

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Eight recommendations for approaches to raising attainment in numeracy, sourced from Education Endowment Foundation report on [Improving Mathematics in Key Stages Two and Three](#).

- Use assessment to build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding
- Use manipulatives and representations
- Teach pupils strategies for solving problems
- Enable pupils to develop a rich network of mathematical knowledge
- Develop pupils' independence and motivation
- Use tasks and resources to challenge and support pupils' mathematics
- Use structured interventions to provide additional support
- Support pupils to make a successful transition between primary and secondary school



Conditions for success and sustainability - Numeracy

Published in 2019, the Education Scotland Thematic Review titled “[Multiplying skills, adding value](#)” highlights the following areas as consistently working well:

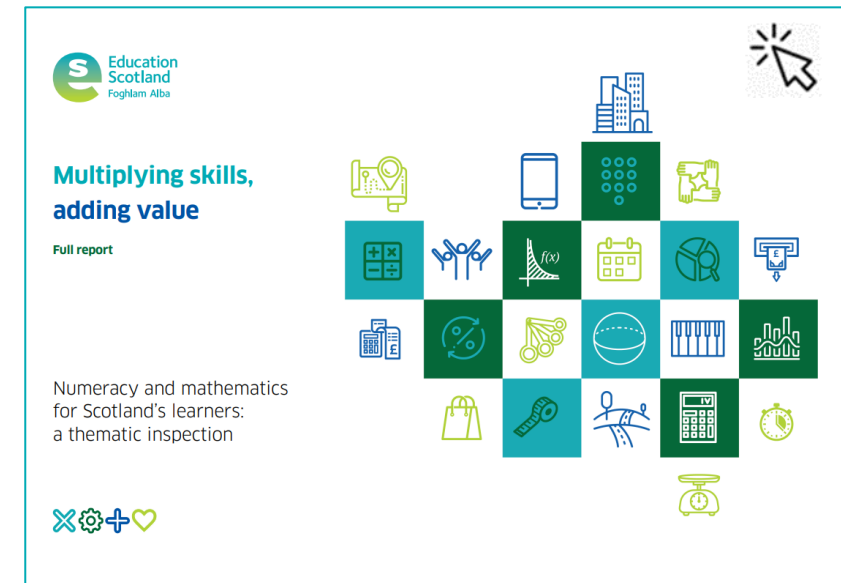
Curriculum

- The commitment of staff to improve the curriculum in numeracy and mathematics, building on proven strengths and tackling key areas for improvement.
- Staff’s investment in career-long professional learning in aspects of numeracy and mathematics.
- The clarity which settings and schools have achieved in shared understanding of the key features of national, local and establishment policies, for numeracy and mathematics, which seek to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

Learning and teaching

- Positive relationships among and between learners and staff, laying foundations for a positive tone to learning in numeracy and mathematics.
- Clear commitment to closing the gap in attainment in numeracy and mathematics, between children from the most and least disadvantaged areas.

- Most learners have positive views about learning in numeracy and mathematics. Most respond well to strategic approaches, for example the concrete/pictorial/abstract structure.
- Teaching is well organised, and almost all staff offer clear explanations.



Conditions for success and sustainability - Numeracy

Assessment

- Senior leaders have a clear strategy for promoting assessment as an integral part of learning and teaching.
- A range of assessment data is used very effectively to identify learners' needs and plan learning across the school, specifically for targeted groups of learners.
- A range of well-considered and carefully planned approaches to moderation, including those using the National Benchmarks within and across schools, supports staff to make confident and accurate judgements. This increases the reliability of assessment data and leads to improved outcomes for learners.
- High-quality professional learning is building teachers' and practitioners' confidence and increases their skills in assessment of learners' progress.
- Skilled analysis and interpretation of high-quality assessment data supports robust tracking and monitoring of learners' progress. It ensures that next steps in learning for individuals and groups of learners are identified accurately.
- Children and young people are fully involved in the assessment of learning. High-quality feedback and learning conversations ensure that children and young people have sound knowledge of themselves as learners. Learners understand what is expected of them, their strengths and the areas where they need to improve.

Other areas worth considering in assessment

- English for Speakers of Other Languages(ESOL) - support the process of carrying out initial assessment of English language level with ESOL learners.
- Using formative assessment to support high quality feedback on learning.
- Using assessment strategies to support high quality learning and teaching.
- Approach assessment as part of their planning for learning and teaching.

Exemplars - Numeracy

- [South Lanarkshire: Hareleeshill Primary School - A Constructivist approach to improving numeracy](#)
- [Scottish Borders: Cluster approach using Model for Improvement methodology to closing the poverty-related attainment gap in numeracy](#)
- [Glasgow City: Using a Lesson Study approach to improve learning and teaching in numeracy](#)
- [Inverclyde: Raising attainment in numeracy and closing the poverty-related attainment gap using strategic equity funding](#)
- [Numeracy in Inverclyde \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Developing conceptual understanding of maths through blended learning \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Impact of Attainment Scotland Funding on Numeracy and Mathematics 2022-25 \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



Useful resources - Numeracy

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Education Scotland National Improvement Hub - Resources to support learning, teaching and assessment within numeracy and mathematics](#)
- [DigiLearnScot - Secondary Numeracy and Mathematics – Wakelet](#)
- [DigiLearnScot - Primary Numeracy and Mathematics – Wakelet](#)
- [Mathematics | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)
- [GLOW - Numeracy and Mathematics Professional Learning Community](#) (GLOW login is required to access this link)
- [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap in numeracy and mental health | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

Research and professional reading



- [Multiplying skills, adding value - Numeracy and mathematics for Scotland's learners: a thematic inspection | HM Chief Inspector Report](#)
- [Education Scotland \(GLOW\) Numeracy and Mathematics Key Documents](#) (GLOW login is required to access this link)
- [Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour? | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)
- [A National Response to Improving Mathematics \(NRIM\) in Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Health and wellbeing

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

The health and wellbeing curriculum enables learners to develop their own knowledge and skills through the co-dependency of mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. When delivering a robust and inclusive health and wellbeing curriculum for all young people, it is important to remember the age and stage of learners, the school context and the lifelong skills that learners will require to thrive in the future.

Learners in poverty are more likely to experience poor mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing, as are their families. The health and wellbeing curriculum shares important learning around improving learners' knowledge and skills to cope with some of the challenges and potential barriers they may experience.

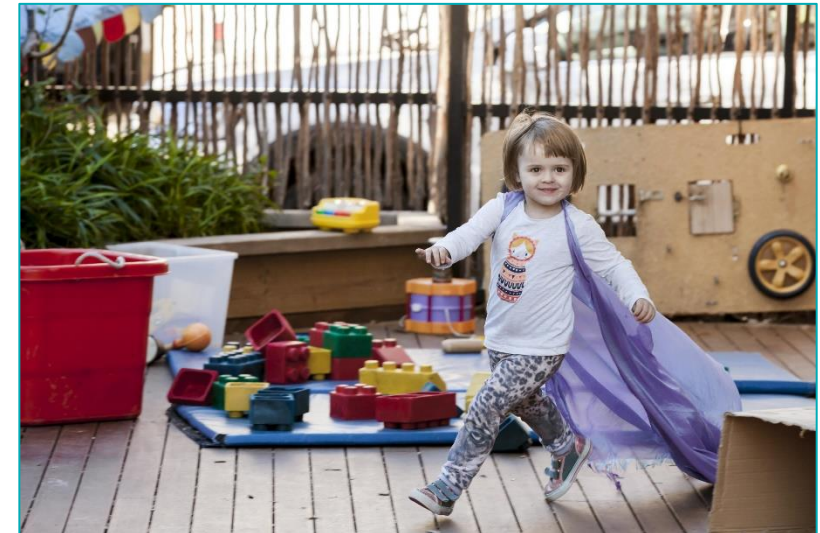
The six organisers within the health and wellbeing curriculum are;

- **Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing**
- **Planning for choices and changes**
- Physical education, **physical activity and sport**,
- Food and health
- Substance misuse and
- **Relationships**, sexual health and parenthood.

*The aspects of the health and wellbeing framework which are the responsibility of all adults who are working together to support the learning and development of learners, are highlighted in bold.

Education Scotland have developed a share point within Glow [National Health and Wellbeing PLC - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com) that focuses on the health and wellbeing curriculum. There are links to teaching and learning, resources, accreditation and wider opportunities and, Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) opportunities for practitioners.

**A GLOW login is required to access the PLC



Health and wellbeing

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

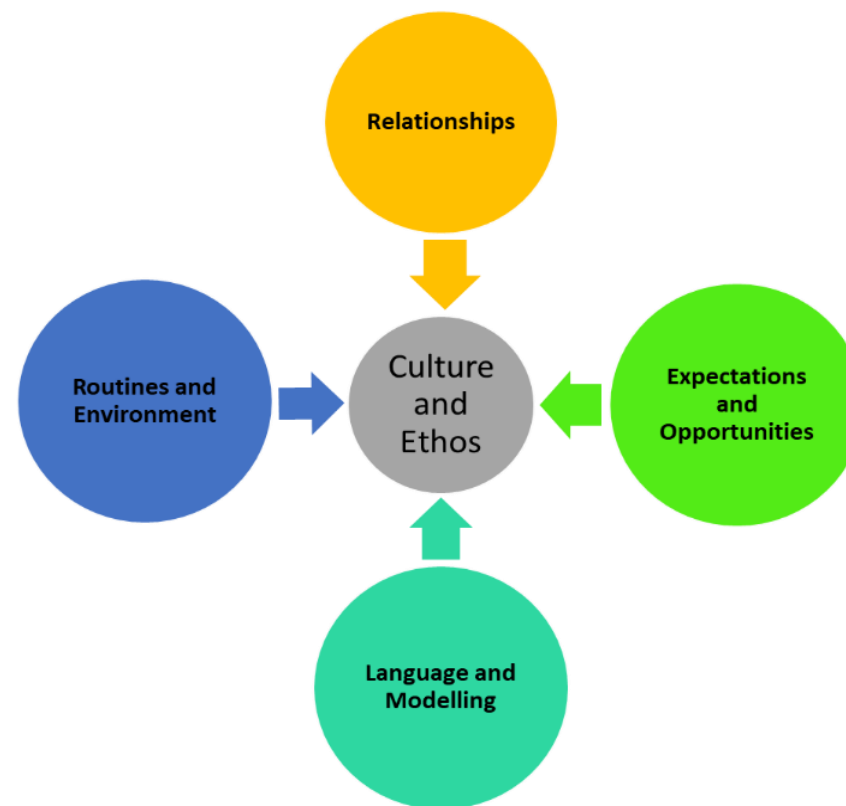
Build positive relationships across the learning community

A culture where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure and where their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated is essential to the development of good relationships. To create this environment for effective learning and teaching, there should be a shared understanding of wellbeing underpinned by children's rights and a focus on positive relationships across the school community.

Scottish-based research indicates that schools with catchment areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation and exceeding expectations in attainment, demonstrate positive relationships throughout the school community. Children and young people are also meaningfully involved in decisions which affect them at all levels of the school: [Developing a positive whole-school ethos and culture – Relationships, Learning and Behaviour \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/developing-a-positive-whole-school-ethos-and-culture-relationships-learning-and-behaviour/pages/2_to_4.aspx)

Work closely with relevant partners

Learners should experience activities which enable them to develop the skills and attributes they will need to achieve and sustain positive destinations beyond school. Demands and employment patterns are changing, so it is particularly important for all young people to develop high levels of skill and an understanding of the world of work, training and lifelong learning to undertake and sustain opportunities. This is supported by recommendations in the [Skills Development Scotland's Careers by Design Review report](#).



Health and wellbeing

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

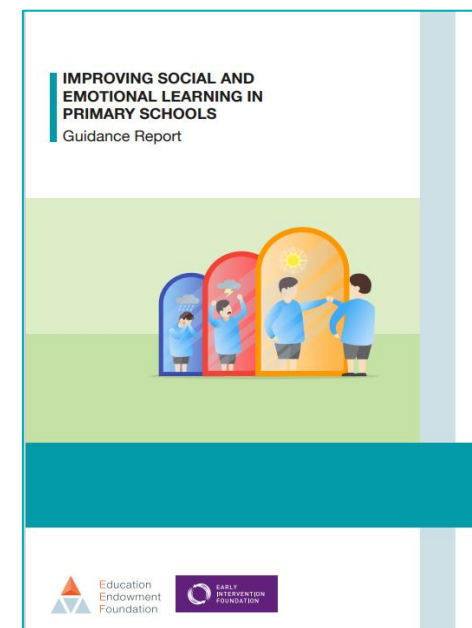
Include effective learner participation in design of the health and wellbeing curriculum

Effective learner participation means that a good education can become relevant, valuable, and supportive of achievement and attainment. Teachers and school leaders are distinctively positioned to facilitate meaningful and effective learner participation. [Learner Participation in Educational Settings \(3-18\)](#).

As well as considering what can be done universally to add value for all learners, it is important to think about how targeted and small group interventions, across the health and wellbeing curriculum, contribute to improving outcomes for learners affected by poverty. Learners should be supported to understand and exercise their rights regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and background. They should be supported to contribute to a range of decision-making, both locally and through links to the wider community: [Life skills and enrichment | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#).

Encourage CLPL in relation to learners needs

Linking CLPL to the needs of learners and the school context will enable practitioners to deliver themes across the health and wellbeing curriculum that are relevant and relatable to learners: [Delivering equity and closing the poverty related attainment gap | Learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#).



[Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools PDF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Health and wellbeing

Conditions for success and sustainability

Learning and Teaching

According to research by the [Sutton Trust](#), “the effects of high-quality teaching are especially significant for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds: over a school year, these pupils gain 1.5 years’ worth of learning with very effective teachers, compared with 0.5 years with poorly performing teachers (Sutton Trust, 2011).” In other words, for learners affected by poverty, the difference between an effective teacher and an underperforming teacher is a whole year’s learning.

A range of partner agencies and stakeholders should be utilised to deliver a curricular focus on mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Partnerships and multi-agency working make a significant contribution to supporting children’s and young people’s learning in PSE/health and wellbeing and meeting the range of their needs.

Professor Ken Muir’s report [Supporting documents - Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) stated there should be:

“A continuing focus on literacy and numeracy in primary schools but with greater recognition of the importance of health and wellbeing and the contribution made by all areas of the formal and informal curriculum and interdisciplinary learning” (Muir 2022:19).

Establishments should consider using a wide range of approaches to enhance the learning environment and develop positive relationships, including:

- a curricular focus on social and emotional wellbeing,
- restorative approaches,
- trauma informed,
- nurturing approaches,
- peer mentoring and,
- solution oriented approaches.

These approaches should be embedded within the establishments learning and teaching policy with appropriate support, as required, for all staff. [Health and wellbeing; Responsibility of all - Making the links...making it work | Self-evaluation \(education.gov.scot\)](#).

Health and wellbeing

Conditions for success and sustainability

Curriculum

Involving learners in reviewing, designing and delivering the health and wellbeing curriculum is essential to provide learners with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in challenging times.

A key message in the [Thematic inspection of PSE and HWB in Scotland's schools and early learning and childcare settings \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/thematic-inspection-of-pse-and-hwb-in-scotland/schools-and-early-learning-and-childcare-settings/Pages/default.aspx) was the importance of increasing opportunities for children and young people to be involved in designing their PSE/HWB programme: [Young children have powerful voices | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/young-children-have-powerful-voices/Pages/default.aspx)

Increased physical activity can have a positive impact on a learner's health, educational attainment and life chances. In 2011, the Scottish Government made a commitment to ensure that by 2014, every learner will benefit from at least two hours of Physical Education in primary school and two periods (100 minutes) in S1 to S4 per week.

The food and health curriculum should be based around low-cost healthy eating and partnership working:

- [food in schools connections.pdf \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/food-in-schools-connections/Pages/default.aspx)
- [food in schools contributions.pdf \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/food-in-schools-contributions/Pages/default.aspx)
- [A summary of Good Food Skills Education resources | Learning resources](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/a-summary-of-good-food-skills-education-resources/Pages/default.aspx)

Assessment

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is a way for families to work in partnership with people who can support them, such as teachers, doctors and nurses. [GIRFEC wellbeing resources \(SHANARRI\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/publications/girfec/wellbeing-resources/)

It is important to adapt learning, teaching and assessment to meet the needs of all learners. Flexibility and differentiation are essential within assessment. It is an integral part of learning and teaching and needs to be planned for in advance. It requires staff to have knowledge of their learners, so they can support the collation of evidence to highlight the learner's journey. [curriculum for excellence \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/curriculum-for-excellence/Pages/default.aspx)

The Education Scotland resource [Main messages for Primary schools](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/main-messages-for-primary-schools/Pages/default.aspx) highlights key information when evaluating progress in health and wellbeing for practitioners working with learners in primary school settings. It can also be used to support professional dialogue, professional development and increase confidence in practitioners when evaluating progress in health and wellbeing.

Health and wellbeing Exemplars

- [How learners flourish through family engagement - Braes High School | Practice exemplars](#)
- [A whole school approach to wellbeing support | Practice exemplars](#)
- [Cost of the School Day – understanding and addressing financial barriers at school | Practice exemplars](#)
- [Family Learning in North Ayrshire | Practice exemplars](#)
- [Dunblane High School in partnership with Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Research Network \(SHINE\) | Resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [West Partnership – Interesting practice: Wellbeing \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

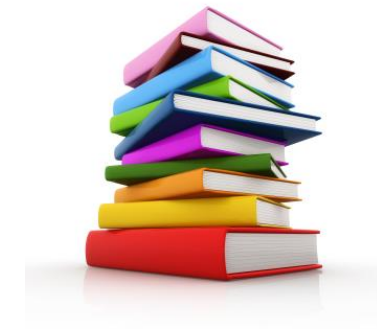


Health and wellbeing Useful resources

- [The Compassionate and Connected Classroom curricular resource \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [National Action Enquiry Programme Reports 2018-19 | Research](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Health and wellbeing: Principles and practice \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Pedagogy for equity – relationships](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [National Health and Wellbeing PLC - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.sharepoint.com/) (GLOW login is required to access this link)
- [Health and wellbeing; Responsibility of all - Making the links...making it work | Self-evaluation](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Thematic inspection of PSE and HWB in Scotland's schools and early learning and childcare settings \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Mental health and wellbeing: whole school approach: framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/)

Research and articles

- [The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment \(Public Health England\)](https://www.gov.uk/)
- [Child and Adolescent Health and Wellbeing in Scotland - Evidence Review \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/)
- [Rapid Evidence Review: Reducing the attainment gap – the role of health and wellbeing interventions in schools \(dera.ioe.ac.uk\)](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/)
- [Public Health Priorities for Scotland \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/)
- [Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education | JRF](https://www.jrf.org.uk/)
- [The Daily Mile, Scotland | Resources | \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)



An overview of Scotland's Curriculum Framework

Scotland's curriculum – Curriculum for Excellence – helps our children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century.

Scotland's Curriculum Framework and information on the Curriculum Improvement Cycle can be found at scotlandscurriculum.scot. It sets out Scotland's approach to curriculum design, what matters and how we do it.

Educators and leaders are encouraged to think of curriculum design as an ongoing process, and to work through the **Why**, **What**, and **How** of curriculum making in their own context.

A growing collection of resources to support curriculum-making in educational settings is available here:

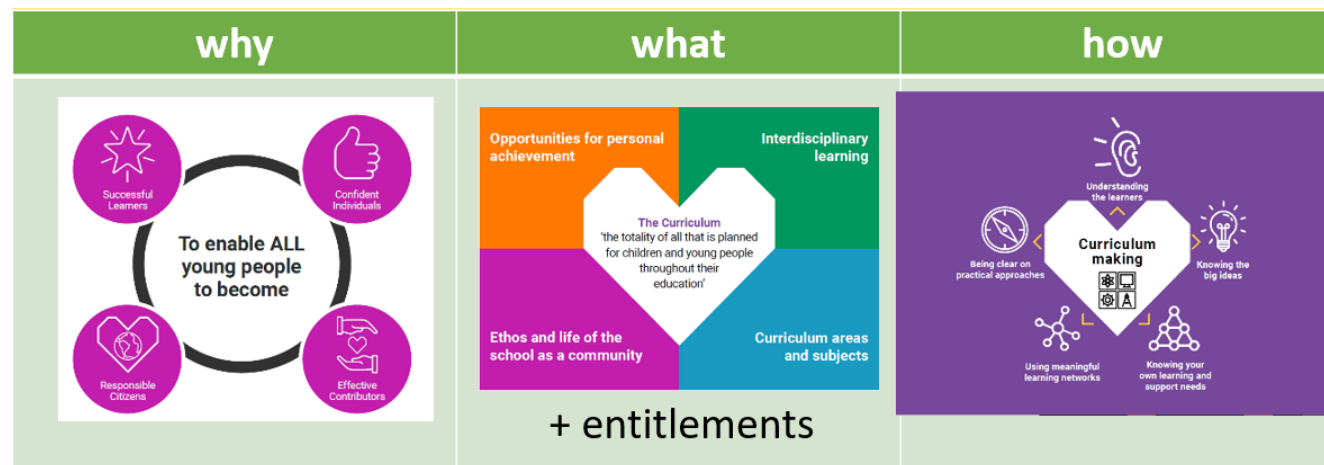
[Resources to support Scotland's Curriculum Framework](#)

The following links will also be of interest:

- [Child-centred play pedagogy toolkit](#)
- [SCQF School Ambassadors Padlet featuring exemplification of Senior Phase Pathways](#)
- [Promoting Race Equality and Anti-racist Education](#)
- [Time for Inclusive Education resources and professional learning offer](#)

There is a wide range of networks and collaborative activity going on to strengthen curriculum design across Scotland.

If you'd like to find out more about the information on this page, explore how educators and leaders are using these resources, or simply have an informal conversation about curriculum design in your context, please reach out to: CurriculumInnovation@educationscotland.gov.scot.



Curriculum and Pathways

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

It is essential that children and young people experience a coherent and progressive curriculum provision through the 3-18 continuum.

An effective curriculum is based on the experiences and outcomes, and design principles of progression; coherence; breadth; depth; personalisation and choice; challenge and enjoyment; and relevance.

Children and young people are entitled to access high-quality learning in all curriculum areas and through outdoor learning.

All staff take responsibility for developing literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and digital literacy across the curriculum.

Learners are given opportunities to demonstrate these skills at a high level in a variety of meaningful contexts underpinned by a curriculum rationale relevant to the school.

An effective curriculum provides flexible learning pathways which lead to raising attainment through meeting the needs and aspirations of all our learners. Learning pathways support children and young people to build on their prior learning and ensure appropriate progression for all learners.

In the Senior Phase it is important to consider the major disruptions to every sector of the economy which have had a significant impact on the labour market. Schools need to prepare their young people for this by providing learner pathways relevant to local context. Local and national labour market intelligence data is available through Skills Development Scotland to support this.



Conditions for success and sustainability - Curriculum and Pathways

An effectively designed curriculum will develop the knowledge and skills of children and young people and reflect the four contexts of learning: curricular areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, ethos and life of the school, and opportunities for personal achievement.

Children and young people have an entitlement to experience a curriculum which is coherent from 3-18, and provides opportunities for developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Effective partnership working with connected settings and sectors across the learning stages of 3-18 can significantly enhance the coherence of the curriculum developed in the context of the wider learning community. With collaborative working and shared understanding of a common curriculum rationale, progression for learners becomes less disjointed. Curricular progression at key transition stages should be seen as equally important as that of pastoral transitions.

An effective curriculum provides flexible learning pathways which lead to raising attainment through meeting the needs and aspirations of all our learners. Learning pathways support children and young people to build on their prior learning and ensure appropriate progression for all learners.

A curriculum should evolve through regular review and refresh, in partnership with learners and the wider school community, to ensure that it remains relevant and coherent in supporting the delivery of better outcomes for learners.

Children and young people disadvantaged by poverty and wider inequalities may lack social and cultural capital. This could result in reduced awareness of how to access the full range of opportunities that exist beyond formal school education. To ensure equity, it is essential that schools effectively target and support those young people and their families to raise awareness and accessibility of modern curriculum and employment opportunities.



Exemplars - Curriculum and Pathways

- [Education Scotland - Learning across the four contexts - Multiple Schools exemplars](#)
- [Education Scotland\) - Primary school curriculum: Middleton Park PS](#)
- [Education Scotland\) - Primary school curriculum: Queensferry PS](#)
- [National Numeracy and Mathematics Progression Framework \(NNMPF\) | Research \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Numeracy and Mathematics Progression Framework | Learning resources](#)
- [Social Studies Skills Progression Framework | Learning resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Modern Languages Progression Frameworks \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
 - [First to Second Level](#)
 - [Second to Third level](#)
 - [Third to Fourth Level](#)
- [Profiling employability skills and wider achievements - Kingussie High School | Practice exemplars](#)
- [Skills framework - Larbert High School | Practice exemplars](#)
- [School Leaver Transitions – A targeted approach in West Dunbartonshire | Practice exemplars](#)
- The [Senior Phase Benchmarking tool](#) has been developed to help evaluate your approach to planning the Senior Phase curriculum and to consider any necessary improvements /actions. Revisiting or using this tool may also be a helpful process to go through in light of the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and learner pathways.
- [Curriculum design at Coulter Primary School | Promoting improvement through sharing highly effective practice \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Balancing expectations | Resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Useful resources - Curriculum and Pathways

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [The Curriculum Improvement Cycle \(CIC\) \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/cic/)
- [Resources to support the Refreshed Curriculum for Excellence Narrative \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/resources-to-support-the-refreshed-curriculum-for-excellence-narrative/)
- [Finding pathways for your child, Developing the Young Workforce \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/developing-the-young-workforce/)
- [A summary of outdoor learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/outdoor-learning-resources/)
- [Young Persons guarantee](https://www.education.gov.scot/young-persons-guarantee/)
- [DYW senior phase developments - Foundation Apprenticeships \(FAs\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/dyw-senior-phase-developments-foundation-apprenticeships-fas/)
- [Education Scotland: A summary of Developing the Young Workforce \(DYW\) resources](https://www.education.gov.scot/education-scotland-a-summary-of-developing-the-young-workforce-dyw-resources/)
- [Developing the Young Workforce: Embedding equality in resources for learning](https://www.education.gov.scot/developing-the-young-workforce-embedding-equality-in-resources-for-learning/)
- [Evaluation of curriculum design in Scotland, National thematic inspections \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/evaluation-of-curriculum-design-in-scotland-national-thematic-inspections/)
- [Education and Skills | YouthLink Scotland](https://www.education.gov.scot/education-and-skills-youthlink-scotland/)
- [Youth Voice Toolkit \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/youth-voice-toolkit/)

Research and articles - Curriculum and Pathways

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.



- [Economy People and Skills report| Skills Development Scotland](https://www.skillsdevelopment.scot/economy-people-and-skills-report/)
- [YouthLink Scotland - Youth work and employability - an audit of reach and impact \(2022\)](https://www.youthlink.scot/youth-work-and-employability-audit-reach-impact-2022/)
- [Nuffield Foundation: Class-of-2020 Education leavers in the current crisis](https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/class-of-2020-education-leavers-current-crisis/)
- [The early careers of education leavers since the COVID-19 pandemic \(ifs.org.uk\)](https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/10441)
- [Learner Pathways: A key to successful curriculum design \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/learner-pathways-a-key-to-successful-curriculum-design/)

Assessment

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. It helps to provide a picture of a child's or young person's progress and achievements and to identify next steps in learning. Assessment approaches need to promote learner engagement and ensure appropriate support so that all learners can achieve aspirational goals and maximise their potential.

A variety of assessment approaches, which allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities in different contexts, are key to our understanding of the progress learners are making.

The adoption of a range of valid and reliable assessment approaches should be integral to planning of learning and teaching. Assessing progress across the broad spectrum of learning and applying learning in different contexts, will help practitioners to plan, track progress and summarise achievements of learners. This should support learners in their subsequent stages of learning and development.



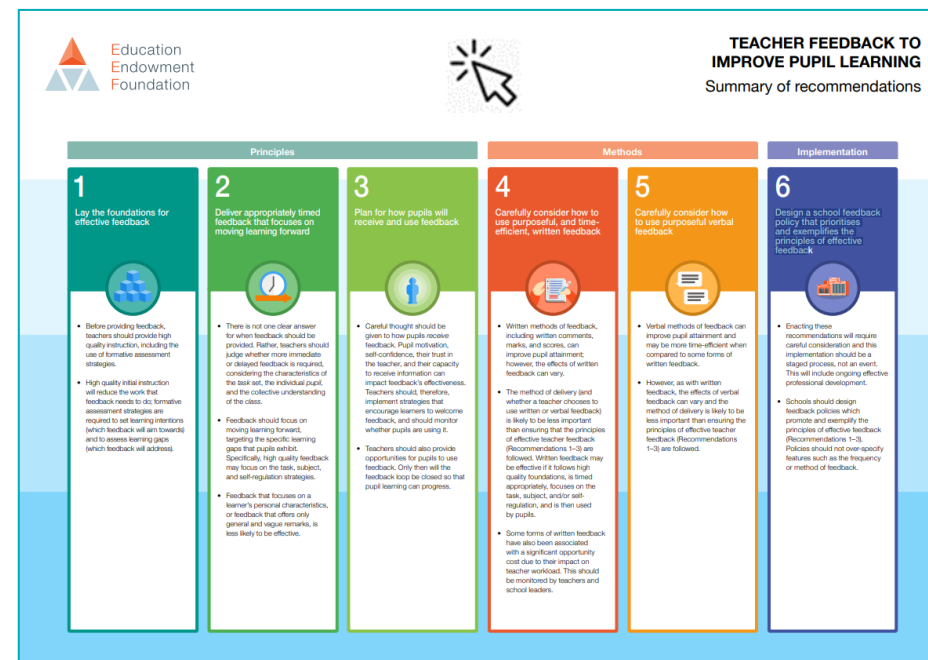
Assessment

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Providing effective feedback to learners is one of the most significant factors in ensuring equity for learners disadvantaged by poverty and wider inequalities. Children and young people facing disadvantage often lack the social capital and access to additional support external to the school environment to assist them with school work and study. Families may be unable to provide direct academic support which may impact the chances of learners meeting their full potential. The importance of teachers and practitioners as professionals delivering equity through high-quality feedback to learners cannot be overstated.

The Education Endowment Foundation report on [Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning](#) summarises six effective practices

- Lay the foundations for effective feedback
- Deliver appropriately timed feedback that focuses on moving learning forward
- Plan for how pupils will receive and use feedback
- Carefully consider how to use purposeful, and time efficient, written feedback
- Carefully consider how to use purposeful verbal feedback
- Design a school feedback policy that prioritises and exemplifies the principles of effective feedback



Conditions for success and sustainability - Assessment

The adoption of a range of valid and reliable assessment approaches should be integral to planning of learning and teaching. Assessing progress across the broad spectrum of learning and applying learning in different contexts, will help practitioners to plan, track progress and summarise achievements of learners. This should support learners in their subsequent stages of learning and development.

Learners will progress in different ways and will be able to demonstrate their achievements in different ways. Assessment approaches should help learners to show progression and enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways which are appropriate to learning. Practitioners should support approaches which allow learners to demonstrate:

- their breadth of learning across the curriculum
- the level of challenge to which they are able to respond
- the degree to which they can apply what they have learned in new and unfamiliar contexts across the curriculum

Learners will progress in different ways and will be able to demonstrate their achievements in different ways. In order to support this, assessment should be seen from the perspective of the learner.



Exemplars - Assessment

- [Assessment within the BGE: Education Scotland thematic inspection - signposts to highly-effective practice](#)
- [Assessment in the broad general education 2020/21 | Learning resources](#)
- [Assessment in the Senior Phase | Learning in Scotland | Parent Zone \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Dylan Wiliam: Assessment strategies | Learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Dylan Wiliam – Using assessment strategies to support feedback | Learning resource \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Dylan Wiliam: Formative assessment | Learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Dylan Wiliam - Self and peer assessment | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Education Scotland: Effective observation leading to effective assessment](#)
- [Assessment Approaches - Dundee City Council](#)
- [Gathering of listening and talking evidence – Dundee City Council](#)



Useful resources - Assessment

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Assessment: Some useful strategies – Dundee City Council](#)
- [West Partnership Assessment and moderation toolkit](#)
- [Assessment Approaches - Dundee City Council](#)
- [Assessment and feedback | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Research and articles

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [Closing the Attainment Gap: 8 Insights to Help You Improve Your Strategy \(insidegovernment.co.uk\)](#)
- [Weaving-Education-Theory-and-Practice-in-Oceania: Rethinking Educational Assessment: Improving our \(usp.ac.fj\)](#)
- [Research Supporting the Ten Principles: Assessment Practices | Great Schools Partnership](#)
- [Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment - final report: Scottish Government response - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)



Leadership

[Section overview](#)

[What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?](#)

[Conditions for success and sustainability](#)

[Exemplars](#)

[Useful resources](#)

[Research and articles](#)

[Self-evaluation for equity](#)

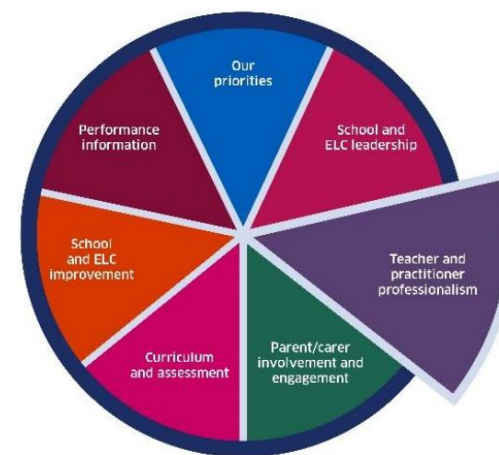
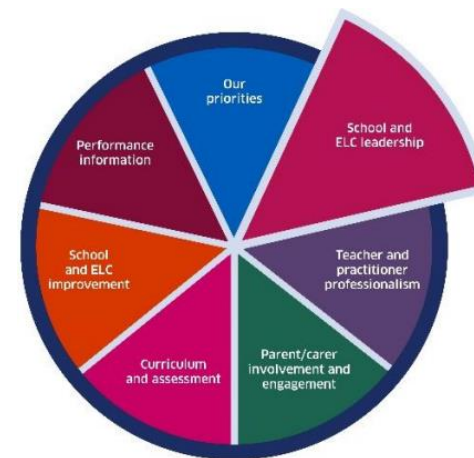


Section overview - Leadership

Effective leadership at all levels is essential if schools and local authorities are to accelerate progress in ensuring equity and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The importance of social justice and social justice leadership is recognised in the GTCS suite of Professional Standards, which clearly set out an expectation of socially just practices for teachers at all levels. In the section entitled 'Being a teacher in Scotland', the professional values of **social justice**, trust and respect and integrity are highlighted as central to what it means to be a teacher in Scotland. Commitment to reflecting on the connections between values, actions and career-long professional learning is a critical part of developing teacher professionalism. School Leadership and Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism are two of the drivers for improvement set out in Scotland's National Improvement Framework. This section of the Equity Toolkit focuses on leadership to ensure equity.

Defining social justice

Social justice is the view that everyone matters and deserves the same opportunities. The aim of social justice is to create a fair and equal society where each individual's rights are recognised and protected, and where decisions made are fair and honest.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Leadership

Social justice leadership is not solely a function of headship.

In the table opposite we see 4 themes:

- Pedagogical leadership – practitioners using their knowledge and skills for the benefit of ALL learners, working collaboratively across the school to that end
- Middle leadership – the connection between playroom/classroom practice and strategic development;
- School leadership – the shaping of whole school culture, structures and relationships
- System leadership – constructive collaboration to influence across the system.

This leadership continuum highlights actions to promote and ensure equity at all levels of education.

Source: Christine Forde & Deirdre Torrance (2017) "Social justice and leadership development, Professional Development in Education", 43:1, 106-120, DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2015.2131733

Table 2. Social justice leadership across a leadership development continuum.

Pedagogical leadership	Middle leadership	School leadership	System leadership
Acting on collective values systems	Contributing to collective values systems	Building collective values systems and commitment	Shaping values
Inclusive pedagogies	Building shared understandings of inclusive practice	Ensuring inclusive practices meet the needs of all learners across the school	Reducing the equality gap across the system
Know and interrogate policy	Lead staff in reviewing policy to identify issues and actions	Critically review policy and identify areas for action across the school	Influence and shape national policy
Understand issues and challenges related equity and equality in the classroom	Plan and review teaching and learning provision in relation to equity and equality	Balance the rights and responsibilities of teachers and pupils in ensuring equity and equality	Build commitment to an equality agenda across stakeholders
Explore personal values and vision for equity and equality in education	Ensure a shared vision underpins the teaching and learning programmes	Build a common vision across the school community for equity and equality	Guardianship of the purposes of education addressing the needs of all learners across the system
Respect and value diversity in classroom communities	Act with integrity in dealing with diversity in leading teaching and learning	Managing ethical dilemmas through mediation to resolution	Build collaboration across the system to address issues relating to priorities and the needs of diverse learners
Justify teaching strategies on the basis of values related to the needs of all learners	Acknowledge the challenges of meeting the needs of diverse learning and work constructively to address these	Capacity to articulate and justify to the school community principled decisions	Champion sets of values related to equity and equality across the system

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Leadership

Research identifies a number of elements that contribute positively to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap. Strong leadership; high quality teaching and learning; a targeted approach; a curriculum that is inclusive and addresses gaps; and effective use of data are among these. Staff at all levels can support recovery and accelerated progress by ensuring a focus on these.



Research referred to is -

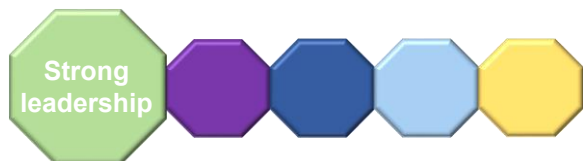
Tackling disadvantage: what works in tackling the achievement gap in schools?

Review of Education

Vol. 3, No. 2, June 2015, pp. 138-174 Demie & Maclean

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Leadership



Strong leadership at all levels will drive forward improvement in the outcomes of children and young people. This requires an inclusive school culture that is aspirational for all learners, underpinned by a commitment to a shared vision of equity.

Useful links:

- [SLF online 2021 Leadership of inclusive practices to tackle educational inequity – YouTube](#)
- Podcast considering social justice leadership in practice. [Education Scotland: Signposting Equity Issue 11 \(office.com\)](#)
- [Ten Principles for Effective and Equitable Educational Recovery from COVID-19 – OECD](#)
- [Michael Fullan on Leading in a Culture of Change - Getting Smart](#)



The provision of high-quality teaching and learning is essential to raise attainment and tackle the poverty-related attainment gap. Additional targeted interventions can build on this, but the provision of universal high quality universal teaching and learning will support sustainable progress.

Useful links

- [SLF Online 2021 Pedagogy for Equity – YouTube](#)
- [SLF online 2021 Tracking and monitoring to support learners disadvantaged by the impact of poverty – YouTube](#)
- [Metacognition and self-regulation | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)
- [Dialogue, reflection and feedback with practitioners about learning | Sharing what's working well | National overviews | Supporting remote learning](#)
- [Dylan Wiliam – Using assessment strategies to support feedback](#)
- [Dylan Wiliam: Formative assessment](#)

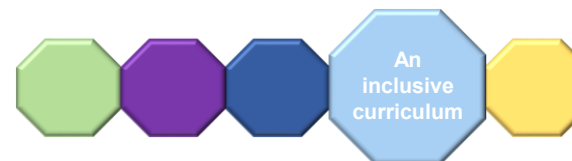
What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?



In addition to providing universal high-quality teaching and learning, delivering a targeted approach allows learners impacted by poverty to accumulate advantage and achieve their full potential. A targeted approach provides additional support to individuals or groups of learners (and their families, if appropriate) to address specific gaps and/or barriers.

Useful links:

- [Evidenced Based Interventions - YouTube](#)
- [Learning Through Play: Increasing impact, Reducing inequality | The LEGO Foundation\(learningthroughplay.com\)](#)
- [Poverty-Alliance-Mentoring-and-Tutoring-ReviewFINALv2.pdf \(povertyalliance.org\)](#)
- [Stirling's Equality and Equity Toolkit \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

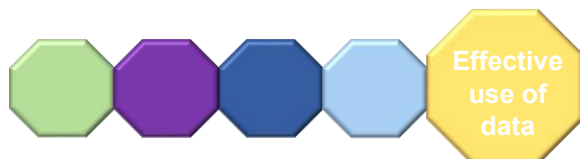


A school's curriculum can be an effective tool in tackling the poverty-related attainment gap. Understanding the needs of learners impacted by poverty is vital to designing the best curriculum for them to address disadvantage arising from poverty. Education Scotland's Curriculum Design Toolkit is a suite of design tools to ensure learners, and their needs are genuinely at the heart of their own curriculum.

Useful links:

- [Curriculum Design Toolkit | Learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Curriculum Co-Design | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Learning which reflects the principles of Curriculum for Excellence | Sharing what's working well](#)
- [Resources to support the Refreshed Curriculum for Excellence Narrative](#)

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Leadership



Effective use of data supports the identification of learners impacted by poverty, their gaps and the underlying barriers leading to those gaps. Effective use of data will also support robust monitoring and evaluation of progress and the impact of approaches and interventions.

Useful links:

- [Data Use For Equity: Amanda Datnow and Vicki Park](#)
- [Small Data for Big Change: What does it mean for teachers? | Pasi Sahlberg](#)
- [Pasi Sahlberg - Big Data or small data: What's the key to unlocking learning opportunities? – YouTube](#)
- [Data and the Poverty Related Attainment Gap – YouTube](#)



- [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap through effective use of data – Inverclyde](#)
- [Using the Model for Improvement methodology to close the poverty related attainment gap in numeracy – Scottish Borders](#)
- [Effective use of data exemplification \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Effective use of data \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Conditions for success and sustainability - Leadership

In your classroom/playroom/department/school/local authority, create a culture that will support and nurture equity:

- Create the vision*
- Build a collective values system*
- Critically review policy* and ensure inclusive practices*
- Work collaboratively and value partners
- Ensure all staff understand the causes and impacts of poverty
- Ensure a relentless focus on ensuring equity and closing the poverty-related attainment gap

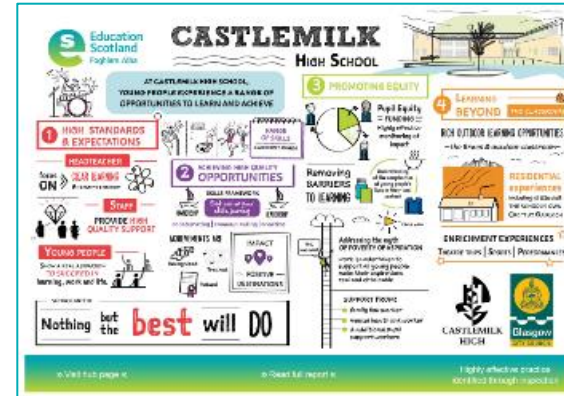
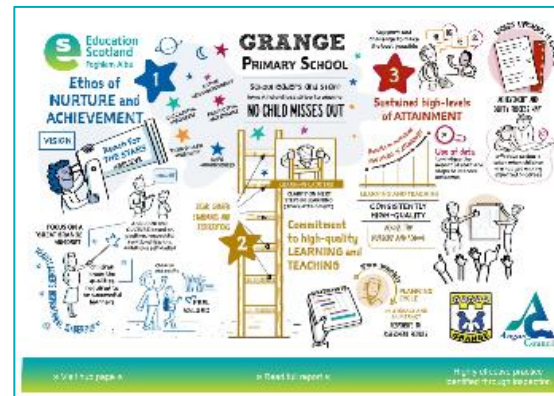
*From: Christine Forde & Deirdre Torrance (2017) "Social justice and leadership development, Professional Development in Education", 43:1, 106-120, DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2015.1131733



Exemplars - Leadership

Click on sketch notes to view full version

- [Monitoring and tracking at Douglas Academy \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Sketchnote - Renfrewshire Council – Closing the Attainment Gap - February 2019 | Practice exemplar \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Using quality assurance to improve learning and teaching in Kirkliston Primary School, Edinburgh \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Developing Collaborative Action Research to improve impact in Dundee \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Leadership for Equity in Dundee \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)



Useful resources - Leadership

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Achieving Excellence and Equity: 2026 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)
- [How good is our school fourth edition - HGIOS 4 | Inspection frameworks Education Scotland](#)
- [UK Poverty 2022: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK | JRF](#)
- [Effective use of data \(education.gov.scot\)](https://education.gov.scot)
- [Sharing highly effective features of practice from inspections of the Gaelic sector \(education.gov.scot\)](https://education.gov.scot)

Research and articles

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- Dan Nicolls. [Urgent Action Required | addressing disadvantage](#)
- Deirdre Torrance & Christine Forde (2017): [Social justice leadership in Scottish education — University of Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)
- Christine Forde & Deirdre Torrance (2017) Social justice and leadership development, Professional Development in Education, 43:1, 106-120, DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2015.1131733: [Social justice and leadership development](#)
- [Social Justice in Scottish Education? Revisiting the Question \(dundee.ac.uk\)](https://dundee.ac.uk)
- Paul Fleming, Senior Regional Adviser with Education Scotland, Podcast on social justice leadership in practice: [Education Scotland: Signposting Equity Issue 11 \(office.com\)](#)



Families and communities

Section overview

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Conditions for success and sustainability

Exemplars

Useful resources

Research and articles

Self-evaluation for equity



Section overview - Families and communities

Children and young people spend more than 80% of their time outside school in families and communities ([Closing the poverty related attainment gap: Before and beyond the school gates, Barnardos, 2018](#)). Circumstances beyond school significantly impacts the capacity of children and young people to engage in education. The report [Closing the Attainment Gap in Scottish Education \(Sosu and Ellis, 2014\)](#), published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, evidenced closer partnerships between home and school supports reducing the attainment gap. By engaging effectively with a range of community partners and co-designing effective support and interventions, we can positively impact on outcomes for learners. Enabling stronger links with the wide range of important services for children, young people and their families that sit beyond the school gates is critical to support recovery and accelerate progress. This section provides information and links to strategies and approaches to support equity within families and communities by attending to the following:

Parental Engagement

Family Learning

Partnership and collaboration

Cost of the School Day

Use of community data

Community Learning and Development (CLD)

Community Engagement

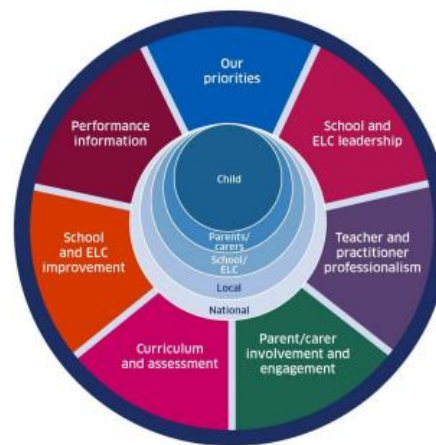
Participatory Budgeting (PB)

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

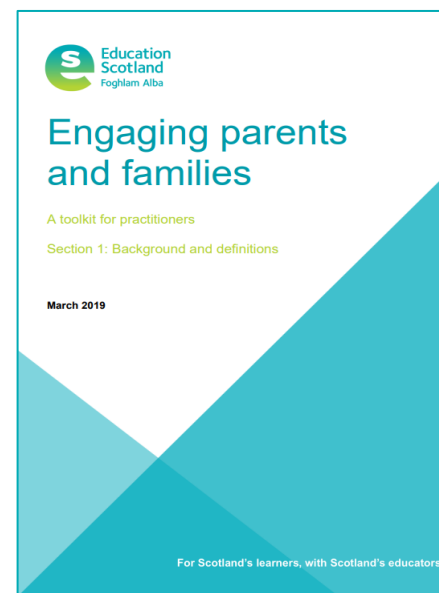
Parental Engagement should be planned for and embedded in a whole school or service strategy. The planning cycle will include a comprehensive needs analysis; the establishment of mutual priorities; ongoing monitoring and evaluation of interventions; and a community awareness process to help parents and teachers understand and commit to a strategic plan.

The impact of engaging parents is evident across attendance and behaviour as well as educational outcomes (Goodall 2017; See and Gorard 2013). The Strategic Framework for: Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement, Family Learning and Learning at Home practical guidance helps to equip anyone who supports the qualification and professional learning of early years practitioners, childminders and teachers. The Framework ensures they have access to, and are signposted towards resources, professional learning opportunities, case studies, research and current examples of good practice. The Professional Learning Guide - Involving and engaging parents and families (Education Scotland) should be used alongside the framework and provides background context and information for practitioners and educators who work with parents and families and/or who are involved in delivering training to the workforce.

The Parental Engagement: how to make a difference report published by the Oxford School of Improvement helpfully outlines considerations for equity through a series of steps, including ethos, communication, reach and what works.



The National Improvement Framework: parent communication plan



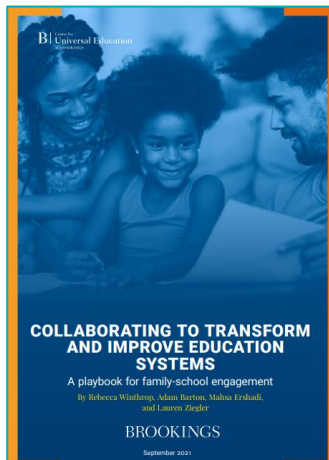
Engaging parents and families - A toolkit for practitioners ([education.gov.scot](https://www.education.gov.scot))

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

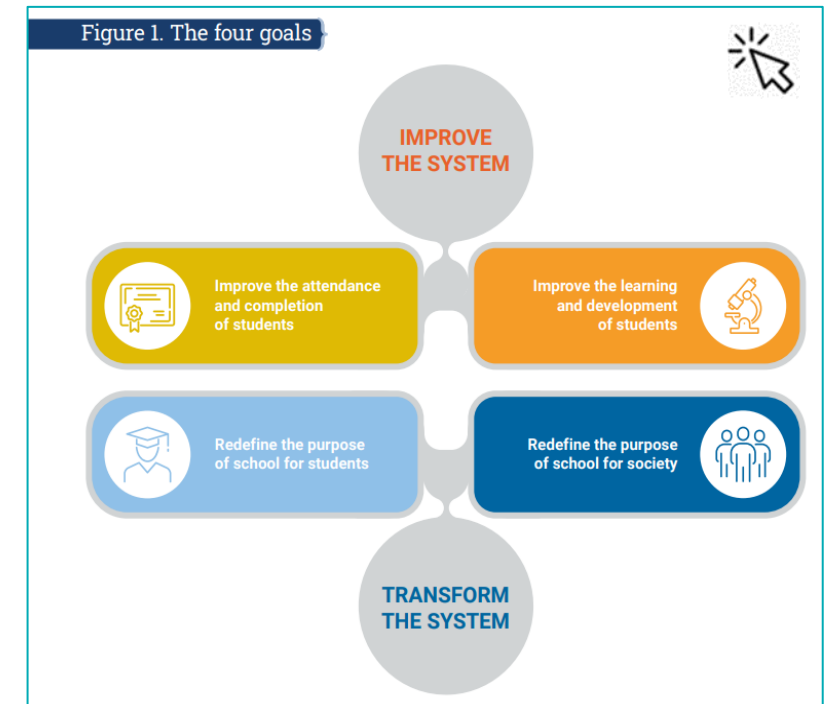
Parental Engagement

Global research developed by the Brookings Institute highlights four goals to connect families with schools (figure 1). They developed a [Family Engagement Playbook](#), which is particularly helpful for shaping perspective on bringing an equity lens to understanding the multiple ways in which families, communities, schools, and education systems can interact. It presents an opportunity to shift broader approaches, and the overall vision, for long-term collaboration. This playbook shows that family-school engagement - namely the collaboration between the multiple actors, from parents and community members to teachers and school leaders - has an important role to play in improving and transforming education systems to achieve four main goals (Figure 1).

See pages [201-206](#) for Scotland's case study example on parental engagement.



“Schools with strong family engagement are 10 times more likely to improve student learning outcomes.”
(Brookings, September 2021).



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Parental Engagement

The [EEF](#) evidences a positive impact on “average of 4 months’ additional progress” for parental engagement through the following:

- early engagement with parents – engagement with parents in the early years is typically more effective and can lay strong positive foundations for the future.
 - consider what method(s) of communication you will use and what information you will communicate to parents to encourage positive dialogue on learning.
 - consider what support you can give to parents to ensure home learning is of high quality.
 - supporting parents to assist their children’s learning or their self-regulation, as well as specific skills, such as reading may help to mitigate against some causes of educational disadvantage.
 - it is important to consider how parental engagement strategies will engage with all parents aligned to the context of the establishment. Parental engagement strategies can increase attainment gaps, if the parents that access parental engagement opportunities are primarily from affluent backgrounds.
- establishments should consider whether parents have the knowledge and skills to provide the support required for their child’s learning, particularly for young people in secondary schools. Interventions designed to engage parents in home learning have not generally been linked to increased attainment. It is important for practitioners to encourage parents to direct their child or young person to their teachers, rather than take on an instructional role themselves, if they do not have the capacity.
 - When introducing new approaches, schools should consider implementation. Information from the EEF’s [Putting Evidence to Work – A School’s Guide to Implementation](#) is a useful resource to assist in this area.



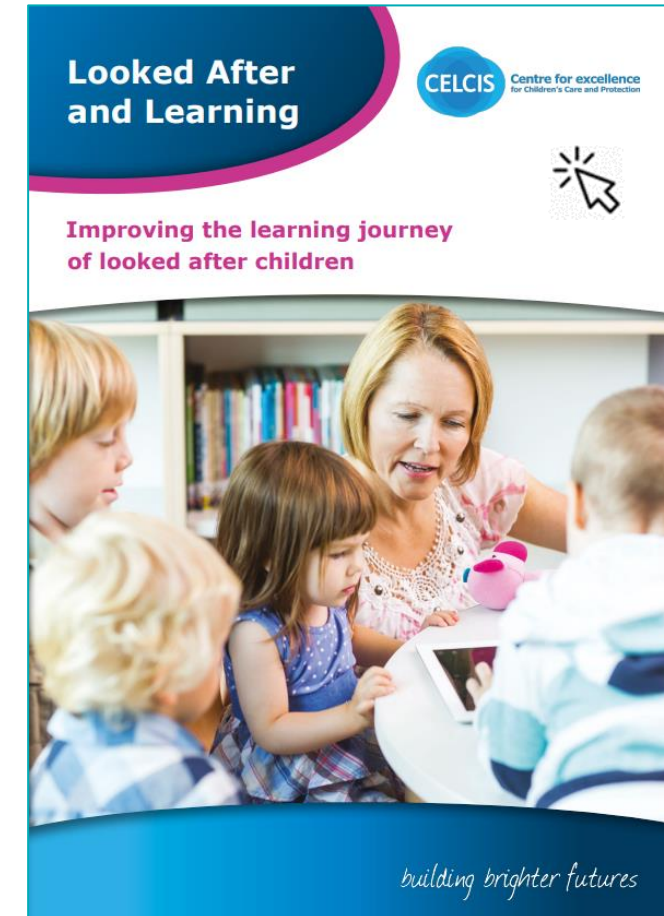
What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Parental Engagement

The 2015 CELCIS [Looked After and Learning](#) report provides seven key areas for improvement, including developing engagement between schools, parents and carers. The report provides evidence, case studies and benchmarks in support of equitable approaches for parental engagement.

“You want the best for your kids, I want better for ma [my] kids, better than I had for masel [myself]. I’m doon [down] here all the time. I think am a bit too pushy sometimes with the kids and am always doon here [at school].”
(Mother, Primary school)

“They [children] see you turn up and they take pride in that, it motivates them to do better, especially if they see that you learn as well.”
(Father, Primary school)



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Family Learning

The [Review of Family Learning supporting Excellence and Equity \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot) highlights “supporting, equipping and building capacity amongst Scotland’s parents to capitalise on children’s opportunities for learning is key in raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.” A family learning approach can also help adults take up adult learning and training opportunities, gain employment or attain new skills. This in turn positively impacts on children’s individual attainment, their aspirations and personal learning journey. Learning outcomes and benefits resulting from family learning approaches can be categorised into five key areas:

- new skills;
- increased confidence and understanding;
- improved communication;
- changed behaviours;
- and changed relationships with community and family.



Community Learning and Development plays a vital role in providing engaging and impactful family learning opportunities. [Family learning](#) is an approach to engaging families in learning outcomes that have an impact on the whole family. Family Learning is supported by National Occupational Standards. In order to support a consistent understanding of family learning Education Scotland have published a number of documents, reports, case studies and resources. Family learning also facilitates increased parental participation and engagement, improved school attendance, reduces persistent absenteeism and can increase learner attainment. The wider outcomes of family learning are shown through skills development, employability, progression into further education opportunities, and interactions within the family, as well as improvements in parental confidence and parenting skills. Family learning should be part of an overall strategic approach to supporting families and communities as and when appropriate

Evidence gathered in the [Review of Family Learning](#) highlights that improving and increasing ways in which parents and families can be equal partners in their children’s learning at home, school and in communities is crucial to raising attainment for all and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Family learning as an approach is not a new concept but one which helps break cycles of poverty and disadvantage amongst communities whilst at the same time enhancing the intergenerational transfer of skills from the parent to the child and the child to the parent.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Partnership and collaboration

Multi-agency partnership working is where practitioners from more than one agency work together to jointly share aims, information, tasks and responsibilities in order to intervene early to prevent problems arising which may impact on the child's ability to reach their full potential. Multi-agency working can be interpreted in many ways as it can mean different things to different people. Multi-agency working is typically used interchangeably with collaboration, coalition, partnership and joint working which can either be informal or formal and can happen at all levels in an empowered system and can derive from a statutory obligation or from a group of colleagues who work in a similar field who want to achieve a common purpose. Therefore, the landscape of multi-agency working can be complex, encompassing a wide range of different types of collaborative activity with a range of partners.

To help navigate recovery and accelerate progress, youth workers across Scotland continue to engage with children and young people. Youth work has an important part to play in supporting young people's learning and health and wellbeing.

The following resources contain useful links and resources for recovery:

- [Positive mental wellbeing - resources to support children and young people \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)
- [Community Learning and Development \(CLD\) Wakelet - Wakelet](#)

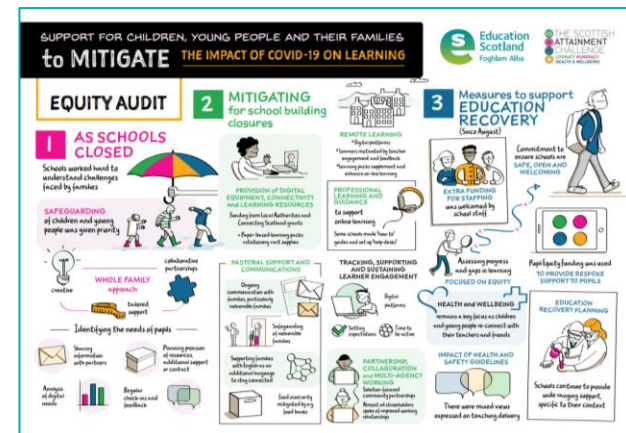


What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

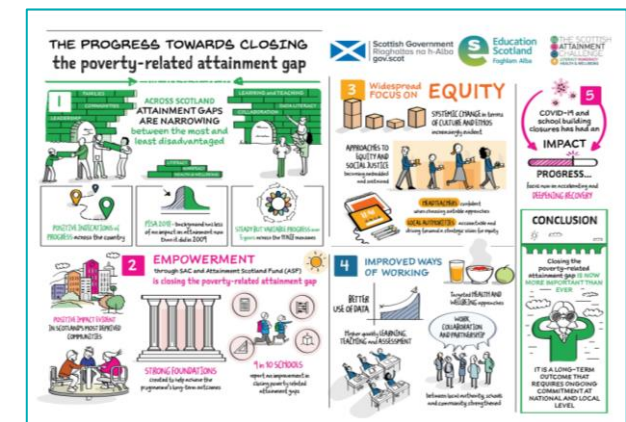
Partnership and collaboration

During school building closures effective partnership working was key to schools being able to correctly identify and support vulnerable families. The [Equity Audit](#) highlighted that many new community partnerships formed quickly, strengthening the links between school and home. The Equity Audit sketchnote illustrates the role of partnership, collaboration and multi-agency working as one of the key factors in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on learners but also pointing as a measure to support recovery through bespoke support. In addition, the [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: A report on progress 2016-2020](#) identified effective collaboration and increased engagement with families and communities as particular areas of progress and can be viewed in the accompanying sketchnote.

Youth workers and school staff often work with the same children and young people but don't always fully understand each other's aims and approaches. Recovery from the Pandemic requires a whole system approach to support young people's health and wellbeing and attainment. [Lost in Translation](#) is a resource to support structured professional dialogue between youth work and school practitioners who are looking to build a greater shared understanding of roles, responsibilities and approaches.



[Equity Audit Sketchnote, March 2021](#)



[Progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap, March 2021](#)

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Partnership and collaboration

Working in partnership with third sector organisations can be on a formal or informal basis. Working with the third sector can provide innovation and a skilled, competent and motivated workforce. Third sector organisations may work in specific geographic locations or in various locations across Scotland. They will vary in size and their levels of capacity, depending upon the parameters and scale of the collaboration or partnership. Establishing contact with the [Third Sector Interface](#) is helpful to explore local providers that are already operating within the geographical area and assess if providers can help meet the need of an establishment or local authority.

A multiagency planning cycle (diagram opposite) has been developed to illustrate seven key steps for establishments to consider when collaborating with partners to close the poverty-related attainment gap. The steps highlighted can be adapted to suit any context when considering collaborating with others. Using the multiagency planning cycle in isolation will not guarantee a successful partnership if a strong foundation is not established first. Before using this cycle consider the rationale for the collaboration. What is the need and purpose underpinning the collaboration?

If there is a need to work with new partners, seek out organisations that complement existing skills and objectives. Seek recommendations from others who have worked with them and listen to what has not worked well and why. [HGIOS?4 \(1.5 Management of resources to promote equity and 2.7 Partnerships\)](#) and the [school and community partnership toolkit](#) may also be useful resources.

Multi-agency planning cycle



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Partnership and collaboration

The [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) provide 7 good-practice principles designed to improve and guide the process of community engagement.



[National Standards for Community Engagement |
SCDC - We believe communities' matter](#)

[The Scottish Attainment Challenge and partnerships with the Third Sector](#)

resource provides information and guidance to identify shared agendas and create purposeful partnerships with appropriate third sector organisations to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The third sector has experience in delivering projects which address each of the three priorities identified for the Scottish Attainment Challenge but is particularly well placed to support improvements to health and wellbeing and to improve employability skills and school leaver destinations.



[Youth Work & Schools Partnerships:
PEF Funding](#)

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

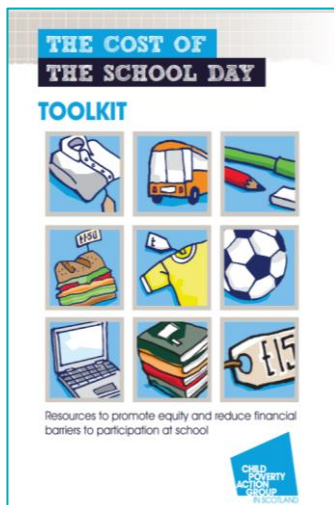
Cost of the school day

The [Cost of the School Day Toolkit](#) sets out the Cost of the School Day process in five steps and features editable action plans, updated information and resources to facilitate whole school conversations about barriers relating to costs associated with school and how to tackle them, and examples of practice.

The resource supports all members of the school community - children and young people, teachers and school staff, parents and carers – to be involved in making Cost of the School Day changes. Every school is unique, so the toolkit ensures that every school community can form a unique plan. [The Cost of Having Fun at school report](#) highlights key findings, ideas and suggestions from learners and families about how events can be made more inclusive, and details interesting practice from schools.

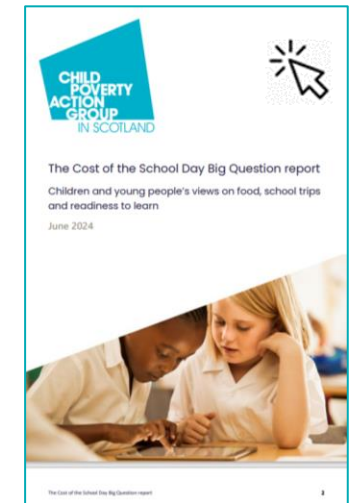
Find out what children and young people, teachers and school staff, parents and carers across Scotland have been doing as part of the Cost of the School Day project [here](#).

The [Evaluation of the Cost of the School Day programme \(2018–2019\)](#) (healthscotland.scot) helps to understand the impact of the programme on removing cost barriers to participation in school. It also aims to understand how to improve the programme and encourage wider adoption of a sustainable approach to the Cost of the School Day.



See next page
for latest CoSD
resources

Children and young people around Scotland took part in the [Cost of the School Day Big Question](#), sharing their thoughts on school trips, food, what helps them feel ready to learn and their ideas about what should change. Read/listen to their insights in the report and films.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Cost of the school day

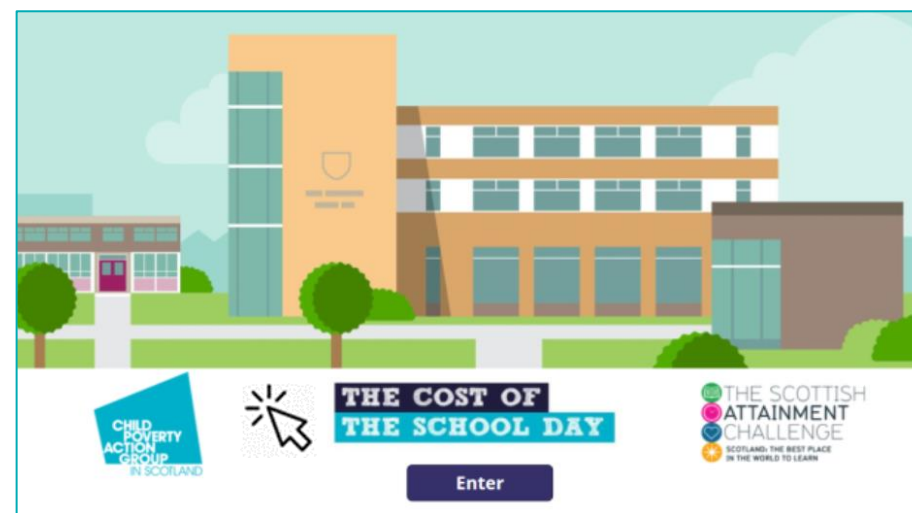
The [Talking about Money and Schools resource](#) is about making sure that everyone finds a way to talk about costs and money. This will help to ensure that families on low incomes can access support and feel part of their school community, and children are able to really engage with everything the school day offers. It's packed full of useful ideas, advice, and practice examples for schools from parents and carers themselves. The [financial help in the early years factsheet](#) also outlines what financial help may be available from pregnancy to school age.

[The Cost of the School Day Ideas Bank](#) has been developed in partnership with Public Health Scotland. It includes measures schools from across Scotland are taking to reduce costs, boost incomes and support low-income families. These case studies are designed to help other schools who might want to try some of the same initiatives.

[The Cost of the School Day resources](#) provide a range of resources for schools and local authorities who are trying to remove or reduce financial barriers to education. Some of their resources have been developed with a focus on England or Scotland to fit the needs of each nation's schools and curriculum, but most of them can easily be adapted for other areas.

[The Cost of the School Day eLearning course](#) is free to access and is for anyone who has an interest in reducing costs to families, supporting learners and promoting equity in education.

The Cost of the School Day eLearning is designed to broaden practitioner knowledge of the financial challenges families face and how schools can make a difference. It includes practical ways to support learners, key learning on child poverty, engaging interactive scenarios, film and audio material, reflections and quizzes.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Using community data

Education and children services are in a unique position where they can work collaboratively across sectors to reduce structural inequalities and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders to [get it right for every child](#). This can be facilitated by having a deeper understanding of the mechanisms in which educational attainment can be negatively affected by poverty. As a result, professionals can design bespoke interventions suitable to their own unique context and achieve excellence and equity of educational outcomes for children and young people.

It is important when considering data as part of contextual analysis to avoid setting a deficit discourse by fixating on the problems children and young people experience and not address the systemic issues that exacerbate the poverty-related attainment gap. Integration of community data can be helpful when understanding the context, you're operating in and when considering approaches to equity. For example, the Northern Alliance, when working as the regional improvement collaborative, worked closely with education practitioners to understand what data existed, how the datasets might link with one another, and how it might help to inform issues associated with poverty and deprivation.

The use and analysis of community data will help to consider trends and approaches within local contexts, including all services that support children and families to understand how best they can work together at a local level to make a difference. Understanding the factors that present barriers to children, young people and their families will help to support families to access the help they need to flourish.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Community Learning and Development (CLD)

"Community Learning and Development (CLD) is a field of professional practice that enables people to identify their own individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and take action to bring about change for themselves and their communities." ([The CLD Standards Council Scotland](#))

The CLD profession is governed by a set of [principles](#) which includes attending to equity to ensure their practice is equitable and inclusive. CLD has a pivotal role in supporting children and young people's well-being; helping children, young people, families and communities through recovery from COVID-19 and in accelerating progress to support closing the attainment gap.

The [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) have been updated to guide thinking about how to engage communities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. The Standards cover some of the issues impacting on communities which might make it more difficult for people to take part in engagement activity. The Standards also points to useful resources and online tools that can help address these issues

Outdoor learning is a vital aspect within Scotland's Curriculum, providing both a safe and challenging learning environment as well as a route to supporting learners' achievement, attainment and wellbeing. CLD and their partners, including the voluntary sector, help to plan and deliver a wide range of progressive, impactful, challenging and sustainable outdoor learning opportunities. The John Muir Trust's [Closing the Gap](#) report provide useful examples of ways to use the award to support equity. Some other examples of projects which evidence impact for equity include:

- [Outdoor Learning Hubs - A Scottish Attainment Challenge Innovation Fund Project](#)
- [Outdoor Learning as a context and an approach for learning Middleton Park School Aberdeen City](#)
- [Curriculum Outdoors Attainment Challenge \(COACh\)](#)
- [Outdoor adventure learning EEF](#)

A summary of outdoor learning resources, including examples from CLD is available from Education Scotland's [National Improvement Hub](#). Advice on the role of outdoor education is described in [Curriculum beyond the classroom: our strategy 2024-2029](#) from the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education.



See page 11 of the thematic inspection of [Successful approaches to learning outdoors](#) for case study from Beeslack High school, Midlothian.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Employment and Skills

CLD plays a critical role in skills development – very often working with people who have been excluded from work and everyday life because of their low self-esteem, skills and confidence. For many people across Scotland, CLD can create a route into skills provision at all levels. This route embeds literacy and numeracy into all of its provision, so that learning and skills development becomes accessible for many people who are disengaged from learning.

Ensuring effective community provision for lifelong learning and skills development is critical to addressing economic recovery.

Mental health and wellbeing

There is an increased need for mental health support in our communities, since the pandemic. CLD provides support for young people and adults who are vulnerable or marginalised through the delivery of targeted interventions to improve health and wellbeing. Through building this trusted relationship, learners are supported to build confidence, improve resilience and connect with personal development opportunities for learning and building new skills.

The Scottish Government's [Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan](#) sets out key actions to promote good mental health and wellbeing, ensuring rapid and easily accessible support is provided to people in distress. CLD will play a crucial role in complementing these interventions, bringing its significant expertise and knowledge to support and target the wellbeing of those most disproportionately affected following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Digital Engagement

The Scottish Government has set out plans to develop a Digital Learning Strategy for Further Education, Higher Education and Community-based Learning. This work will align digital curriculum and platforms to deliver equity of access to learning across Scotland.

The Strategy will build on the work CLD providers have undertaken to support those most [disproportionately affected by COVID-19](#) have access to the digital means needed to engage with services.

Access to all 32 local authority CLD Plans can be found [here](#)



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is relevant to all parts of the public sector and is an area of increasing importance. The [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) requires community planning partners to secure the participation of community bodies in community planning. Account should be taken of the interests of people who experience inequalities of outcome, as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.

Implementing community empowerment is a national priority for the Scottish Government. It is an important part of public service reform, focusing attention on reducing disadvantage and inequality, and improving outcomes for communities. Community empowerment is central to a human rights-based approach to policy and decision-making. The human rights PANEL principles (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and Equality, Empowerment and Legality) means:

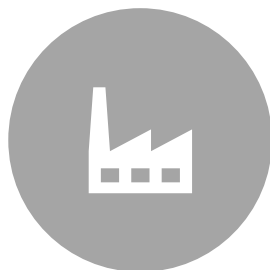
- people should be involved in decisions that affect their rights and be fully supported to take part in developing policy and practices which affect their lives;
- prioritising those people who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights.

- Community empowerment is a gradual process which involves continual learning and the constant building of a community's capacity to articulate and address their priorities. It also involves communities having greater influence and input to decision-making. Public bodies and communities are likely to be at different stages as they develop their understanding and gain confidence in working together. Public bodies need to invest in capacity-building appropriate to their local communities, particularly those facing disadvantage.
- In some communities, people may already be driving change and public bodies have a role in supporting and facilitating this. Other communities will need to be supported to participate more fully. Public bodies should be finding ways to empower communities, for example by sharing and shifting power in decision-making. It is important that children and young people also have a say in services that affect them.
- The [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) have been updated to guide thinking about how to engage communities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. The Standards cover some of the issues impacting on communities which might make it more difficult for people to take part in engagement activity. The Standards also points to useful resources and online tools that can help address these issues.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities



COMMUNITY
CAPACITY BUILDING



CO-PRODUCTION



ASSET-BASED
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



COMMUNITY
EMPOWERMENT

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Families and communities

Participatory Budgeting

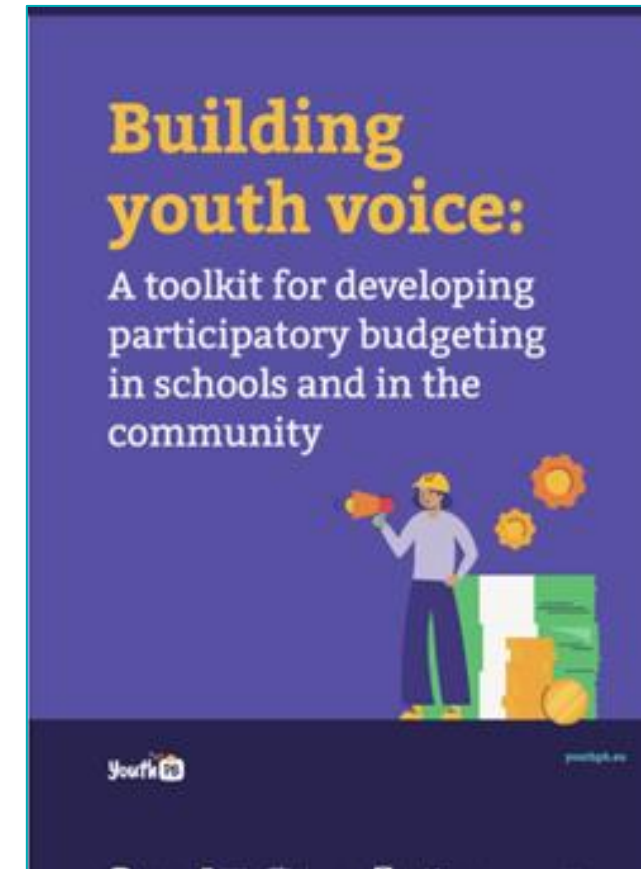
[Participatory budgeting \(PB\)](#) is a way for people to have a direct say in how local money is spent. PB is linked to [community empowerment](#) and aligns with wider policy implementation such as [Children's Rights legislation](#). Practitioners should consider use of well-established engagement tools such as the [Place Standard](#) and PB processes. Practitioners would benefit from proactive engagement with marginalised groups and carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on any proposed plans. Practitioners can learn from existing consultation activity in the local authority and be wary of duplicating community engagement. Local intelligence and analysis of shared data should be used to inform setting priorities with partners and communities.

The [Pupil Equity Fund National operational guidance](#) advocates PB as a core tool to achieve the aims of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and address poverty and inequality experienced by children, young people and their families.

[Building youth voice: a toolkit for developing participatory budgeting in schools and in the community](#) provides practical advice for involving the community and young people in participatory budgeting processes.

[PB Scotland - Participatory Budgeting in Scotland](#) acts as a hub for sharing and learning about the impactful work being done by PB initiatives in Scotland. It provides updates on events, policy and resources relevant to PB in Scotland, and profile good examples of PB in action.

Education Scotland developed a [wakelet](#), which links to national frameworks, practice guidance, and case studies, in support of PB, including within and alongside schools.



Conditions for success and sustainability

Families and communities

Strategy and planning

- Working and allocating funding strategically, with clear linkage between local children's service planning processes and individual school decisions, delivers the greatest impact.
- Transparency in decision making and developing a culture of openness and honesty builds trust. Bring parents into the decision-making process early, rather than at the end and asking for their reaction. Building trust in relationships makes it easier to work through issues or concerns. Engage in dialogue to know preferences and needs.
- Validating parents as co-equal members ensures parents and families have a voice throughout planning, delivering and evaluating as part of a service design process.
- In order to ensure sustainability, a parental engagement strategy should be subject to ongoing support, monitoring and development. This will include strategic planning which embeds parental engagement in whole-school development plans, sustained support, resourcing and training, community involvement at all levels of management, and a continuous system of evidence-based development and review.

Data

- Data-based decision making – effective use of data for equity helps to identify needs, set goals and measure progress.
- Involve families in making decisions about data – it's their story behind the numbers.
- Use data to find out who is not engaged so you can reach out and involve them.

Approaches

- Approaches that remove barriers to participation and build strong relational foundations supports wellbeing for everyone involved.
- Being receptive and open-minded of insights and ideas parents bring to the table encourages respectful dialogue.
- Being flexible with multidimensional communication increases reach and volume of response – use a variety of methods to engage in productive dialogue with parents such as printouts, video calls, phone calls, email, social media, surveys, text messages, face to face meetings and newsletters.
- Empower parents – help them to share their knowledge to encourage participation and instil confidence in the process of engagement.
- Listen and understand what needs are required to be met in order for the child or young person to succeed – not only in school but at home as well.
- Use scripts or flowcharts as guides for sensitive conversations if required.
- Training in parental engagement should be provided in the context of initial teacher education or by an establishment as part of continuing professional development.
- Work with families to collaboratively problem solve educational challenges and bring in outside agencies where required to support complex challenges.

Conditions for success and sustainability

Families and communities

Leadership

- Prioritise parental and family engagement to build capacity and support learner achievement.
- Avoid making assumptions that everyone involved understands each other – ensure clarity and shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, items for discussion, language and terminology.
- Building relationships based on mutual respect and recognition of family needs and culture increases cultural proficiency. Leaders should set the ethos, tone and culture for parental engagement deliberately and consciously.
- Being empathic conveys understanding and helps to build relationships.
- To avoid making assumptions or decisions based on your own traditions, ensure you are in tune with your [unconscious bias](#).

Defining social justice

Social justice is the view that everyone matters and deserves the same opportunities. The aim of social justice is to create a fair and equal society where each individual's rights are recognised and protected, and where decisions made are fair and honest.



Exemplars - Families and communities

- [Bide Oot | Resources | Education Scotland](#)
- [The 1 in 5 - Raising Awareness of Child Poverty Project in Edinburgh \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Doing Our Best: A Children's Parliament and Aberdeen City Council programme located in Bramble Brae, Manor Park, Riverbank and Tullos Primary Schools \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Cost of the School Day – understanding and addressing financial barriers at school \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Cost of the School Day: Abronhill Primary School and Nursery Class \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Building relationships at Braes High School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Family learning at Braes High School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Barriers to parental engagement - Equitable support for children at New Cumnock Primary School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [North Ayrshire Connected Communities Service, Challenging Poverty \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Aspire Programme, Dundee](#) - a community engagement programme that used performing arts across the curriculum to increase children and young peoples' health and wellbeing, self-confidence, self-esteem, learning and skills development.
- [Parental engagement in North Ayrshire - St Matthew's Academy and Pennyburn Primary School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Airdrie Action Partnership | Challenging Poverty \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Family learning at Aileymill Primary School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [A family learning approach to maths - Pizza Maths in Renfrewshire \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [A family learning approach to reading - Pizza Reading in Renfrewshire \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Improving equity at St Louise Primary School \(HMIE\)](#)

Useful resources - Families and communities

CLD, Poverty and Social Justice

A collection of links to online information and resources on the subject of poverty and social justice. Some focus on child poverty and the impact that can have on the children, young people and families we work with. Others give more general information alongside facts and figures.

- [Parentzone Scotland](#) – provides information for parents and carers on education in Scotland.
- [Engaging parents and families](#) – a toolkit for practitioners.
- [Family Learning Framework Advice for Practitioners](#)
- [The Cost of the School Day Toolkit, updated 2025/26](#) - outlines the process, information, resources and practice to tackle barriers created by costs associated with school.
- [About Community Learning and Development \(CLD\)](#) – links to further information about CLD, including youth work, community-based adult learning, family learning and community development.
- [Community Learning and Development Planning 2021 – 2024](#) - link to all 32 local authority CLD plans, developed with learners and communities.
- [Parental engagement | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

- [SIMD \(Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation\)](#) - link to SIMD interactive tool
- [Career Education Standards 3-18: Learning Resource 7](#) – Ensuring Equality of Opportunities
- [YS CostofLiving_report_2022.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#) – survey results from the views of young people about how the current cost of living crisis is affecting them.
- [Early Years Toolkit | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)
- [Tackling Poverty Locally Directory, Glasgow Caledonian University Scotland \(gcu.ac.uk\)](#) The Directory provides a searchable database of local anti-poverty initiatives from communities across Scotland and beyond.
- [Using a family learning approach to increase parental engagement through Read, Write, Count \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Challenging Poverty \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Darren McGarvey - How can education be a tool for equity? \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Useful resources - Families and communities

- Supporting parents to further engage in their children's development Continued Professional Learning (CPL) Modules - this [online CPL module](#) developed by the University of the West of Scotland, is now live from the Scottish Government website. Links to this course and the wider package of CPL modules is also provided via the Twitter page, the Care Inspectorate Hubs Directory of CPL, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) website, and the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Knowledge Hubs.
- Domestic abuse information for educators - resources created by staff from the Inclusion team and the IGBE team, in partnership with Scottish Women's Aid, have been published to help education staff understand the role they can play in tackling domestic abuse. The resources outline the nature of domestic abuse, the indicators and impact on children and young people, and [how to respond to potential cases of domestic abuse](#).
- [A Fairer Start Local: Learning from rapid discovery projects \(nesta.org.uk\)](#) – an approach to closing gaps through local partnerships.
- [Listening Fund – Corra](#) –The toolkit shares resources and activities used by four Listening Fund Partners. It has been curated collaboratively with staff members and in consultation with children and young people to create a reference that advocates listening as a core mechanism and way of being for engagement with children and young people.

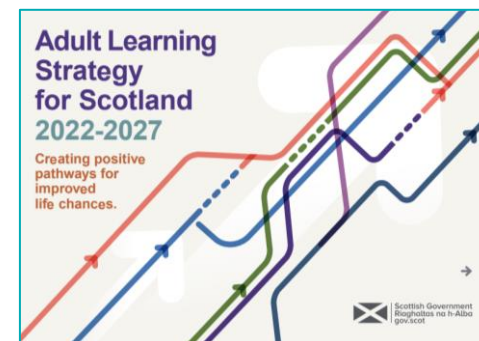
- [Lost in Translation? Working towards a shared language between schools and youth work \(education.gov.scot\)](#) - A learning resource developed by YouthLink Scotland and Education Scotland to support structured professional dialogue between CLD and school practitioners who are looking to build a greater shared understanding of roles, responsibilities and approaches.



Useful resources - Families and communities

- [SWEIC Parental Engagement Event: sharing good practice](#)
Wakelet collection from the South West Regional Improvement Collaborative including links relating to the events.
 - [Engaging fathers in family learning \(session 1\)](#)
 - [Engaging fathers in family learning \(session 2\)](#)
- [Successful approaches to learning outdoors \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
report highlights six connected components of practice that create conditions for learners to experience high quality outdoor learning.
- [Best Start Bright Futures, Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026](#)
Best Start, Bright Futures sets out the delivery plan of Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty. It is a plan for all of Scotland, recognising the contribution all parts of society must make to deliver the change needed for children and families.
- [Adult-Learning-Strategy for Scotland 2022-2027](#)
This strategy aims to create the conditions for connected adult learning opportunities that link Scotland's communities, local authorities, third sector organisations, colleges and universities around an offer of learning for adults, particularly those furthest from inclusion and experiencing disadvantage.

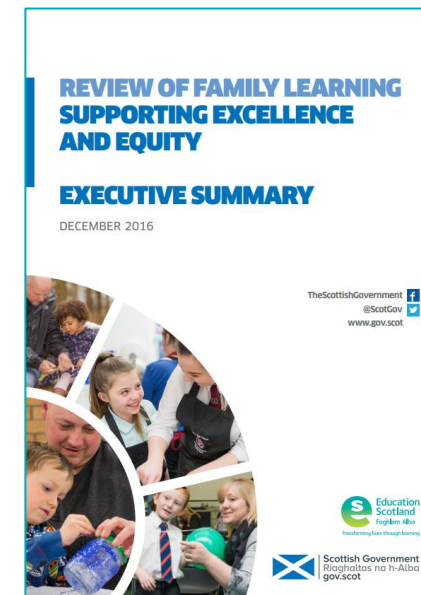
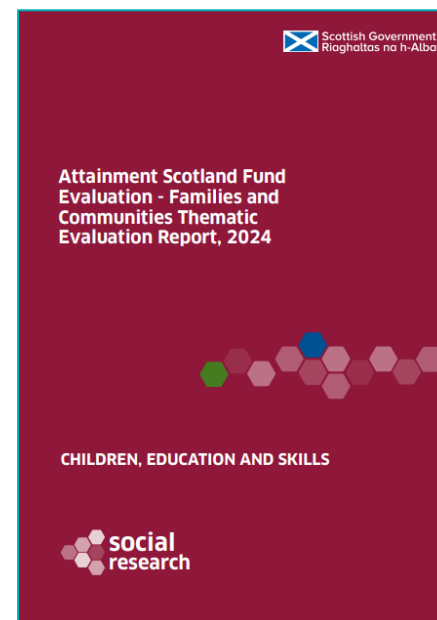
- [Working Together - Equality and Equity Modules – Children in Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
This resource has been developed with parents of children with a range of additional support needs. These modules can help education professionals to understand parents' perspectives and give practical tips about how to work with families. The modules also encourage self-evaluation and highlight useful resources to help education professionals to develop their practice.



Research and articles - Families and communities

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

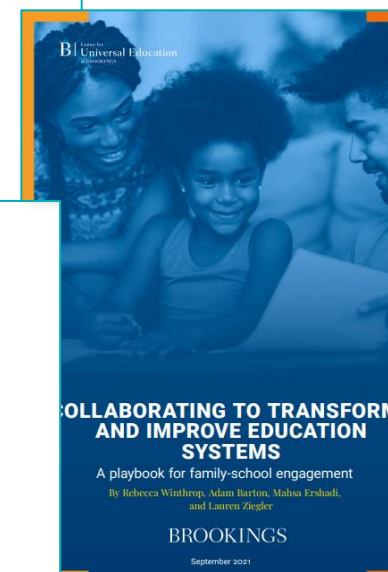
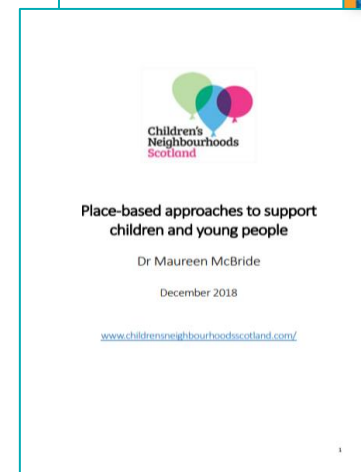
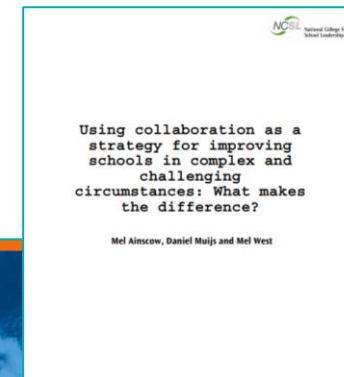
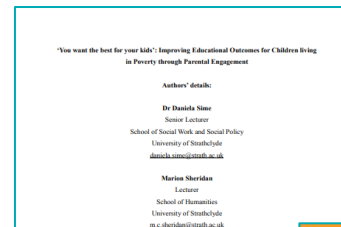
- [Barnardo's Scotland written evidence - attainment challenge - final.pdf \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)
- [What is Family Learning? | Research \(education.gov.scot\)](#) - links to research underpinning family learning approach
- [Review of Family Learning supporting Excellence and Equity \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [CfE Briefing 10 - CLD \(education.gov.scot\)](#) - advice for practitioners and partners and can be used to inform learners and their families about developments in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
- [Youth Work: Closing the poverty-related attainment gap during the pandemic](#) – explores how youth work responded to the needs of young people during the pandemic
- [Parental engagement – equity and equality | The University of Edinburgh](#)
- [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation - families and communities: thematic evaluation report 2024 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Connect](#) - a membership organisation working with parents, families, parent groups, educators and others in Scottish education to make family engagement as good as it can be.



Research and articles - Families and communities

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [Review of best practice in parental engagement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Moving knowledge around: a strategy for promoting inclusion \(Mel Ainscow, 2021\)](#) - collaboration as a strategy for promoting equity in education: possibilities and barriers
- ['You want the best for your kids': Improving Educational Outcomes for Children living in Poverty through Parental Engagement \(strath.ac.uk\)](http://strath.ac.uk) Sime & Sheridan (2014)
- [Parents: partners in education | Essays about parenting | Parenting across Scotland](#)
- [Place-based approaches to support children and young people: Children's Neighbourhood Scotland, 2018](#)
- [Putting our Heads together: A study of Headteacher collaboration as a strategy for school improvement - West and Ainscow \(2005\)](#)
- [BLOG: Capturing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the family relationships of young fathers](#)
- [Engaging parents and families in improving attendance \(education.gov.scot\)](http://education.gov.scot)



Mental Health and wellbeing

Section overview

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

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Section overview - Mental Health and wellbeing

Closing the disadvantage gap

A learner's wellbeing is influenced by everything around them and the different experiences they have at different times in their lives. We know that poverty negatively impacts health and wellbeing. The British Medical Association ([Health at a price - Reducing the impact of poverty, 2018](#)) identified a number of ways in which poverty impacts health outcomes.

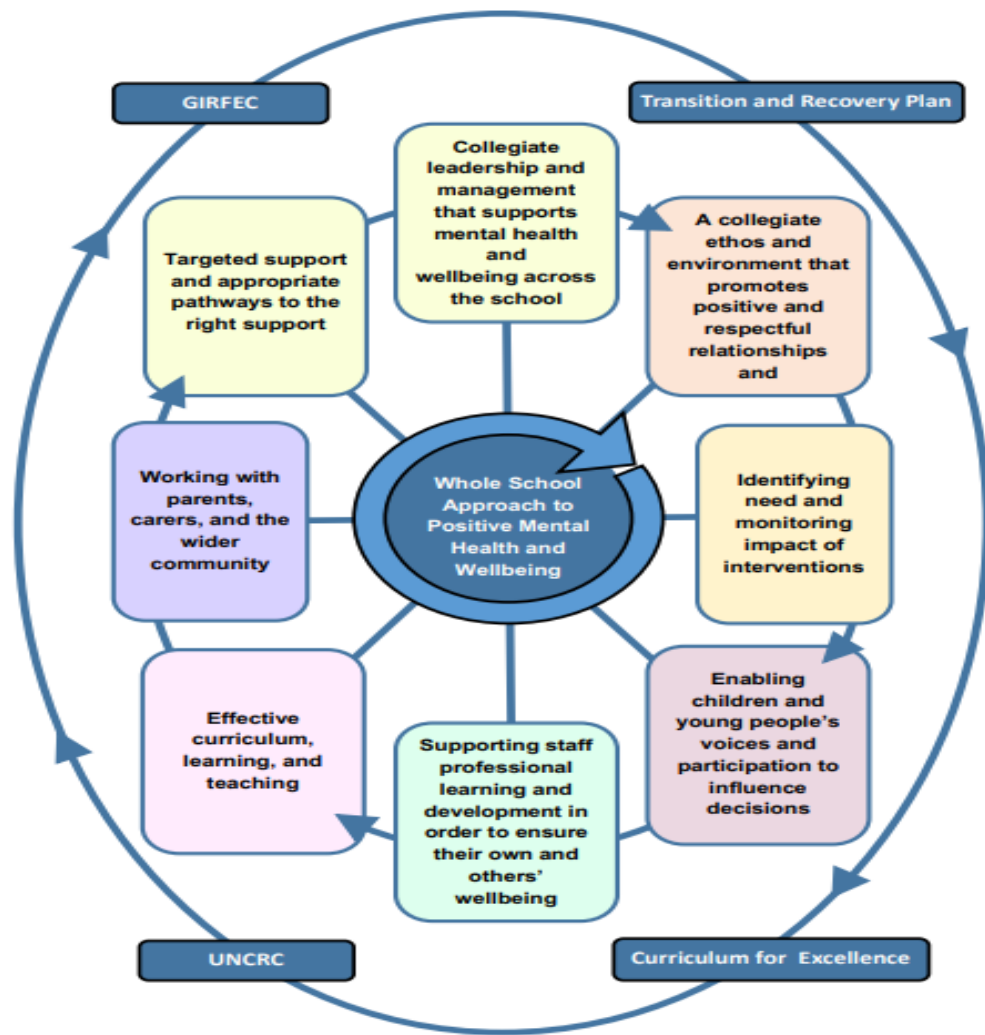
- Poverty can have a significant impact on child health, from the point before a child is even born.
- Children living in poverty are three times more likely to suffer from mental health problems.
- Children living in poverty are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases and diet-related problems.
- Poverty has long term implications on children's 'life chances' and health in adulthood.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation in its 'Poverty and trauma' (September 2020) report states that 'The relationship between poverty and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) is complex and there is not a causal line between the two. However, there is a growing body of evidence showing an association between deprivation and ACEs'. The Scottish Health Survey 2019 found that adults in the most deprived areas were almost twice as likely than those in the least deprived areas to experience four or more ACEs.

Supporting children and young people's health and wellbeing and addressing disadvantage is a priority. This section of the equity toolkit focuses specifically on mental health and wellbeing and signposts resources and guidance to support schools and local authorities in this area.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Mental Health and wellbeing



Take a whole school approach to supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing...

A whole school approach is preventative, universal and includes targeted interventions to ensure that all members of a school community can flourish and sustain a state of being mentally healthy. Taking a whole school approach can also achieve positive outcomes such as helping to reduce stigma and discrimination for those seeking help; support early intervention; promote positive mental health for all and improve the capacity of specialist services by providing support to those who need it at a universal and targeted level.

A whole school approach has eight principles that focus on:



More information on taking a whole school approach and on each of the eight principles can be found in the Whole School Approach Framework, links below.

- [Mental health and wellbeing: whole school approach: framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/whole-school-approach-to-mental-health-and-wellbeing/framework/pages/1_to_4.aspx)
- [A whole school approach to wellbeing support | West Partnership | Williamwood HS](#)

Conditions for success and sustainability

The Cycle of Wellbeing

This Cycle of Wellbeing (National Improvement Hub) draws together a range of recently published resources to support staff wellbeing and the wellbeing of children and young people. It demonstrates the synergies of the resources and how they can be used strategically to forward plan supports for staff and learner mental wellbeing based on evidence gathered within a school community.

[The Cycle of Wellbeing | Learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)

Trauma informed approaches

Being 'trauma informed' means being able to recognise when someone may be affected by trauma, adjusting how we work to take this into account and responding in a way that supports recovery, does no harm and recognises and supports people's resilience.

Being 'trauma informed' is underpinned by the 5 R's:

- **R**ealising how common the experience of trauma and adversity is
- **R**ecognising the different ways that trauma can affect people
- **R**esponding by taking account of the ways that people can be affected by trauma to support recovery
- Opportunities to **R**esist re-traumatisation and offer a greater sense of choice and control, empowerment, collaboration and safety with everyone that you have contact with
- Recognising the central importance of **R**elationships.

NHS Education for Scotland provides professional learning resources to support staff to develop the knowledge and skills required to ensure trauma informed approaches are embedded in practice. Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub is also a source of support.

- [NES Trauma Informed - What is meant by trauma? \(transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot\)](https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/)
- [National Trauma Training Programme – online resources \(NHS\)](https://www.nhs.uk/)
- [Nurture, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma informed practice: Making the links between these approaches \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)



Exemplars - Mental Health and wellbeing

- [Aberdeenshire CLD - mental health and wellbeing peer educators](#)
- [Due regard for learner wellbeing and safeguarding | Sharing what's working well](#)
- [Tracking and Monitoring Wellbeing in Girvan Academy – A Whole School Approach](#)
- [Wellbeing Profile: Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile \(GMWP\) | Learning resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [A whole school approach to wellbeing support | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap in numeracy and mental health | Resources | Education Scotland](#)
- [Mental health support for young people in Dumfries and Galloway Council \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Neurodiversity and wellbeing at Strathmore Primary School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



Useful resources - Mental Health and wellbeing

- [The Cycle of Wellbeing | Learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/learning-resources)
- [The Compassionate and Connected Classroom: A health and wellbeing curricular resource for upper primary](#)
- [Resilience alphabet - building inner strength and wellbeing for kids - primary](#)
- [ACEs and trauma overview - Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) and Trauma - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [NHS Trauma Informed - National Trauma Training Programme Online Resources Summary \(transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot\)](https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/nhs-trauma-informed-national-trauma-training-programme-online-resources-summary)
- [NHS Trauma Informed - Home \(transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot\)](https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/nhs-trauma-informed-home)
- [Positive mental wellbeing - resources to support children and young people](#)
- [Nurture & trauma-informed approaches: a summary of resources and supports \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/nurture-trauma-informed-approaches)
- [SLF Online 2022 Outdoor Education, Equity, Evaluation & Impact for Learners - YouTube](#)
- [CYPMH – Professional Learning Resource](#)
- [National Action Enquiry Programme for Educational Psychologists \(2023-25\)](#)
- [National Action Enquiry Programme for Educational Psychologists](#)
- [Included, engaged and involved: part 1 - attendance in Scottish schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/included-engaged-involved-part-1)
- [Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/included-engaged-involved-part-2)
- [Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: relationships, learning and behaviour - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/developing-positive-whole-school-ethos)
- [MHWB transitions infographic \(e-sgoil.com\)](https://e-sgoil.com/mhwb-transitions-infographic)
- [Barnardo's Scotland | All About Relationships - YouTube](#)
- [Positive mental wellbeing - resources to support children and young people | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

Research and articles - Mental Health and wellbeing

- [Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children](#)
HBSC International Coordinating Centre Child & Adolescent Health Research Unit – a source of health data over time from research collaboration with the WHO conducted every four years in 50 countries and regions across Europe and North America.
- [SHINE – Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Research Network \(gla.ac.uk\)](#)
- [ACEs research - Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) and Trauma - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Community mental health and wellbeing supports and services: framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Mental Health Data Science Scotland \(mhdss.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Relationships and behaviour in schools: national action plan 2024 to 2027 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)



Children's Rights

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Section overview - Children's Rights

- What do we need to consider?
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Rights based practice in the Early Years
- All about dignity in school
- What does UNCRC mean for families?
- Useful resources
- Children's Rights – what works/what can we do?
- How could you implement in your setting?
- Exemplars
- Reflective questions
- Research and articles



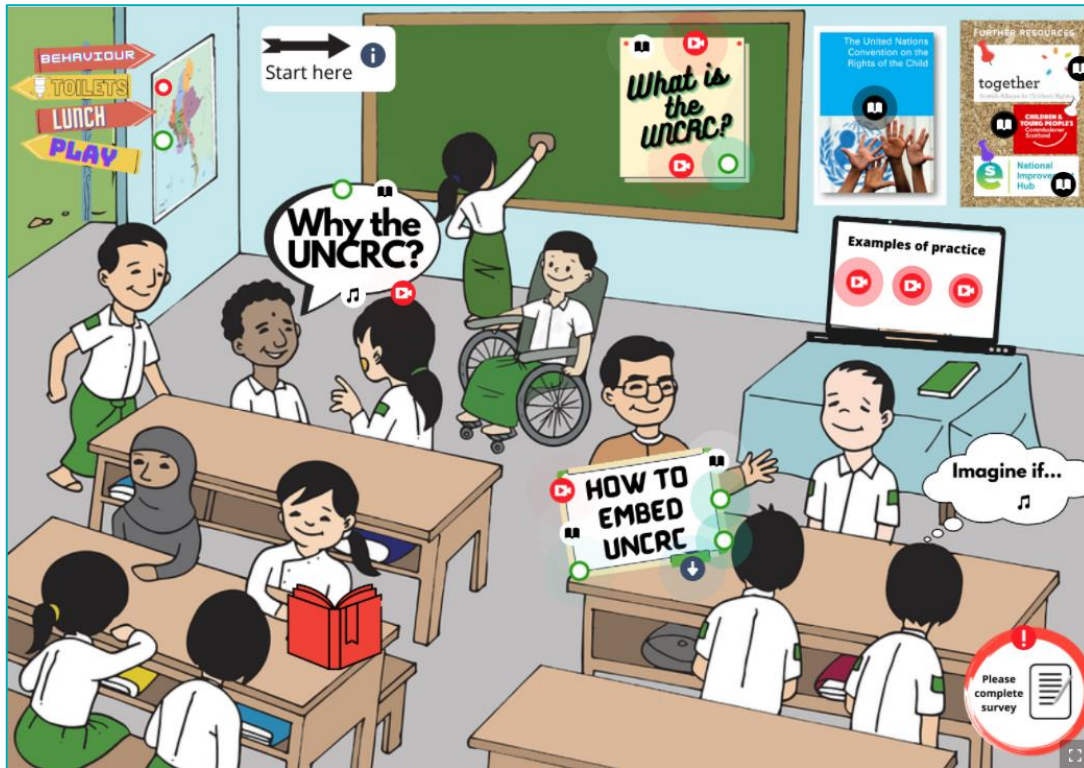
What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Key considerations - Children's Rights

A review of learning from previous pandemics concluded that children can be physically and socially invisible in the context of public health containment measures. Therefore, it is essential to tailor responses to the distinct experiences of children and young people; ensuring they are included and their agency recognised (Inspiring Children's Futures, 2020).

Play is considered to be critical for children's physical and mental health, development, and wellbeing (Bergen, 2009; Lester & Russell, 2010), and key global organisations such as UNCRC have highlighted the importance of children's right to play. However, in times of crises, the value of children's play is often overlooked (UNCRC, 2013). Due to severe lockdown regulations around the world, typical play experiences have needed to adapt to school and playground closures, changes to peer interactions, and social distancing (Graber et al., 2020).



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? UNCRC Thinglink resources - Children's Rights

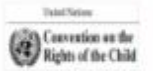


This interactive resource provides access to a wide range of information about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and how it can be embedded within establishments.

It contains examples of practice and implementation.

<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/1480112476593848323>

WHAT IS THE UNCRC?



Every child has the **right** to survival, protection and education. The United Nations Convention on the **Rights** of the Child (**UNCRC**) is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural **rights** of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Rights based practice in the Early Years - Children's Rights

Relationships, CULTURE AND ETHOS

At Children's Parliament, we talk about rights-based relationships. These are based on kindness, empathy, trust, and belief in the human dignity of each and every one of us.

- How would you describe the relationships you have with children? Or the relationships you help foster between children?
- How do you support children to thrive?
- What are your expectations of adults in the setting when it comes to how they are with children and indeed with each other?
- How do the relationships in your setting support the rights of the child?

AGENCY

This is the idea that every person has a level of control and a positive sense of who they are. We want children in early years' settings to develop a strong sense of who they are and to feel they can have and express their preferences, likes, dislikes, opinions.

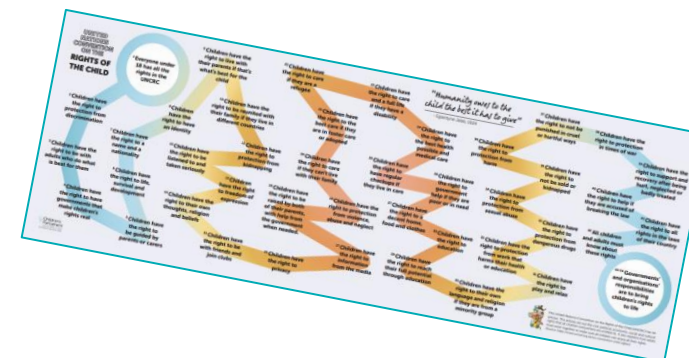
- How does your setting support children with things like having their say, being part of planning, leading activities, being recognised as an individual?

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF RIGHTS

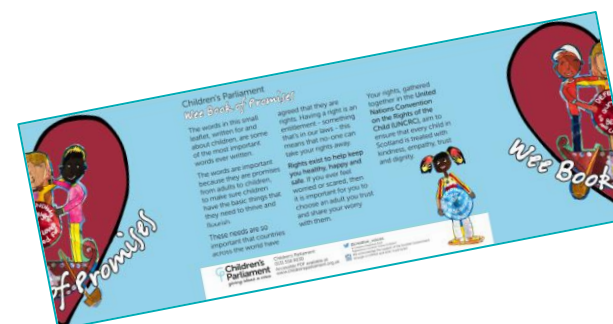
The concept of rights can be challenging for our youngest learners. It is important though that we help children to develop an understanding that their rights are central to everyday experiences and relationships. Children might begin to develop an understanding that they have the right to be safe, to play, to be loved.

- How do you help children understand their rights? You could think about how adults are in their interactions with children, or perhaps some of the activities or resources you use.
- Do you ever use the language of rights?

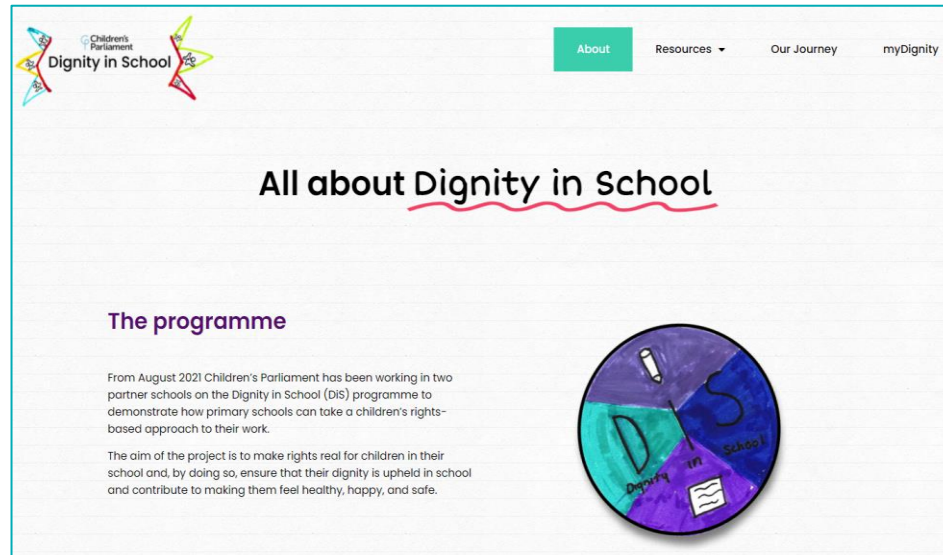
Click here to take you to the website:
[Rights-based practice in the Early Years - Children's Parliament \(childrensparliament.org.uk\)](https://childrensparliament.org.uk)



Wee Book of Promises

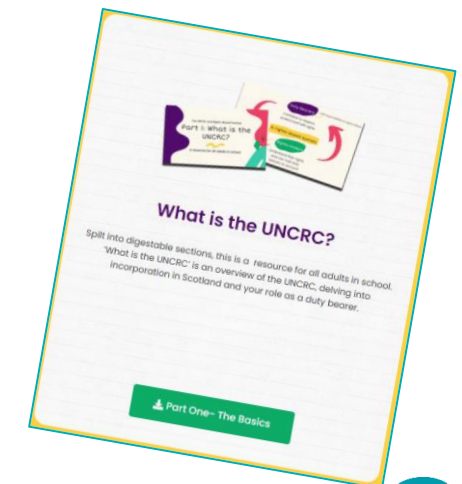
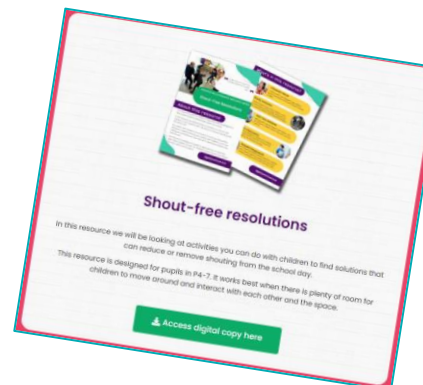
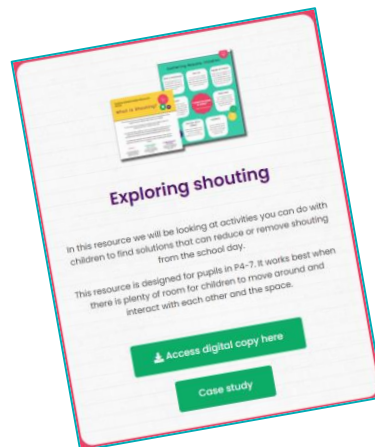


What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? All about Dignity in School - Children's Rights



Click here for more info:
[About - Dignity In School
\(childrensparliament.org.uk\)](https://childrensparliament.org.uk)

Every single person in Scotland has human rights – children have rights to make sure they grow up healthy, happy and safe. Human rights come from the government – they're laws, and nobody can take them away from you. You can think of rights like promises – promises adults have made to help keep children healthy, happy and safe. If a child ever feels scared or worried or unhappy, it's important they talk to someone they trust who will try and help them with their worry. No worry is too big or too small



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? The UNCRC: what does it mean for families?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is crucial for families as well as children – it supports families to bring up children. Its preamble states:

“Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community.

Recognising that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding...”

[The United Nations Incorporation on the Rights of the Child \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) was enacted on 16 July 2024. The act will ensure that children’s rights are respected and protected in Scotland. All [public bodies](#) and organisations that provide services on behalf of a public body must comply with the legislation.



Further information on the UNCRC can be found on the Parenting across Scotland [website](#)



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Children's rights?

Children's Parliament launched [Back to School](#), an online resource for schools to support a rights-based approach to recovery.

Whilst the context of this resource has changed, the practical activities remain helpful, particularly when supporting children on return to school from extended periods of absence. The supporting conversations between children, and between children and adults in school give time and space to pause, reflect and then recover. The activities will support children's recovery in terms of relationships and readiness to learn.

Are the views of all your children and young people heard and acted on?



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Children's rights?

Learner Participation in Educational Settings (3-18)

Guidance and support materials to help schools and early years settings develop an understanding of learner participation and plan for implementation within their setting.

The 'Four Arenas of Participation' provides a framework to help us understand and develop when, where, and how learners can have a say in schools and ELC settings.



Conditions for success and sustainability - Children's Rights

Children's rights – self evaluation

This [self-evaluation approach](#) could be used to provide professional learning to practitioners around the UNCRC and to help them reflect on how they are taking forward children's rights within their school context. It also links well to [How Good is Our School? \(fourth edition\)](#).



A professional learning resource to promote self-evaluation and improvement planning on recognising and realising children's rights is available on the [Education Scotland website](#).



a) Some ideas to consider

- Include as a priority on establishment improvement plan;
- Invite a steering group to lead this priority;
- Audit current knowledge of UNCRC;
- Raise awareness with stakeholders (assemblies; INSET – make links with children protection; parent evenings etc);
- Establishment leaders contribute to full-staff presentation to invite further exploration of rights



a) What could red/amber/green look like?

Not part of current practice	Ongoing development	Consistent practice
A few members of staff/pupils are aware that respecting and promoting children's rights is a priority	Less than half of staff/pupils are aware that respecting and promoting children's rights is a priority	Almost all, or most members of staff/pupils are aware that respecting and promoting children's rights is a priority

- Rights are discussed regularly, visible throughout the setting
- Rights are included on improvement plans
- Dedicated members of staff for children's rights
- Pupils are involved in priority planning

Now agree a rating for the statement

Exemplars - Children's Rights

Series of linked video clips of children and young people from Harlaw Academy, Caldercuil Primary and Longniddry Primary schools noted discussing rights-based approaches:

- [Children and young people from Harlaw Academy, Caldercuil Primary and Longniddry Primary](#) discussing some of the ways they work to realise children's rights – how they implement it, and why rights are important.
- [Children from Longniddry primary](#) discussing how rights-based approach can support equity.
- [Children from Longniddry primary](#) discussing how they were involved in their vision, values and aims.
- [Children from Longniddry Primary](#) speaking about their campaign.
- [Teachers from Caldercuil Primary and Longniddry Primary](#) discussing how they make links with curriculum and rights.
- [Riverbank rights](#) – children discussing their charter and rights that are important to them.
- [St Euanan's Primary](#) demonstrates learner participation mainly in the arena of learning, teaching and assessment.
- [Pre-birth to 3](#) - Children's rights are defined in many ways, including a wide spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, social and political rights.
- [Pre-birth to 3 - Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Emeritus Professor within Childhood and Primary Studies at the University of Strathclyde](#), talks about the rights of children.
- [Doing Our Best: A Children's Parliament and Aberdeen City Council programme located in Bramble Brae, Manor Park, Riverbank and Tullos Primary Schools \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Useful resources- Children's Rights

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Children's rights in Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/childrens-rights)
- [Children's Rights – Wakelet](#)
- [Children: Your human rights - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland \(cypcs.org.uk\)](https://www.cypcs.org.uk/)
- [Improving Gender Balance - Self-Evaluation Framework \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/improving-gender-balance)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\) Booklet for parents, carers and family members | Parentzone Scotland | Education Scotland](#)
- [Welcome to Plan 24-30, Scotland's route map to keeping the promise by 2030 \(plan2430.scot\)](https://www.plan2430.scot/)
- [Children's Rights \(UNCRC\) | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Children's Human Rights | Children First](#)
- [Empowering Youth Voices resource pack \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/empowering-youth-voices)

Research and articles



The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [YoungScot: Lockdown Lowdown report \(2020\)](#)
- [practice-guide-involving-children-and-young-people-in-improving-services.pdf \(care inspectorate\)](#)

Capturing the voice of our children and young people

Section overview

Information on national groups

Information on regional groups

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Exemplars

What to consider next?

Key documents

Self-evaluation for equity



Section overview - Capturing the voice of our children and young people

- SAC refreshed mission
- National groups
- Examples of regional groups through a link to our interactive resource
- Key documents to consider
- Where to begin – 6 key steps
- Participation of children and young people
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- PEF example
- Social justice example
- Participatory budgeting examples
- Reflective questions
- What to consider next?
- Share your examples

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

Information on national groups

Capturing the voice of our children and young people

YouthLink Scotland

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

Young Scot

In 2018, Young Scot launched the 'Attainment Challenge: National Strategic Partnership' alongside Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Improvement Service, Local Authorities, and the National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO) to help close the poverty-related attainment gap and to tackle food and rural poverty.

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

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

Centre for excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS)

CELCIS convene a network of colleagues from local authorities who are using the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT) model or similar. Currently, 16 local authorities in Scotland have chosen to allocate funding from the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund towards the establishment and development of a VSHT role, or a Care Experienced Team (CET).

Hunter Foundation

The Scottish Government announced £19.4 million of funding, partly funded through the ASF, to support MCR Pathways to roll out its Young Scottish Talent mentoring programme in local authorities who wish to participate. Columba 1400 are also being supported through this programme with additional funding of £7.5 million being provided by the Hunter Foundation.



**YouthLink
Scotland**



Centre for excellence
for Children's Care and Protection



THE
HUNTER
FOUNDATION

Information on regional groups

Capturing the voice of our children and young people

When you access our interactive resource, you will see examples of groups already in place in some of our local authorities

Click here to find out more: [Capturing the voice of children and young people](#)

REGIONAL GROUPS

We have 32 local authorities across Scotland, each of whom capture pupil voice in a variety of ways. Here are some examples.

- Aberdeen
- Renfrewshire
- Stirling

- Falkirk
- East Renfrewshire
- Clackmannanshire

- Inverclyde
- Glasgow
- Argyll&Bute

- West Dunbartonshire
- Orkney Islands

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Capturing the voice of our children and young people

Participation and engagement with children and young people should begin at the project design stage. They should be included in the planning and coordination of activity from the start.

Awareness of child rights and meaningful participation complement and strengthen child protection practices

Click on the graphic or link to view this interactive resource with an overview and link to the CYP voice pilot.

Six key stages

In all participation and engagement work, children and young people should be actively listened to, treated fairly and have their opinions respected and taken seriously.

Participation of children and young people is an important mechanism to ensure that, as an organisation, we are listening and communicating to our members the views and perspectives of children and young people on a wide variety of issues, coupled with the best available evidence of what works for supporting children and their families.

These principles and guidelines can be applied at all times, from start to finish of any work involving children and young people, and have been designed to cover the following six stages:

1. Planning and coordination
2. Inclusion
3. Child protection
4. Delivery
5. Communication
6. Feedback, evaluation and next steps

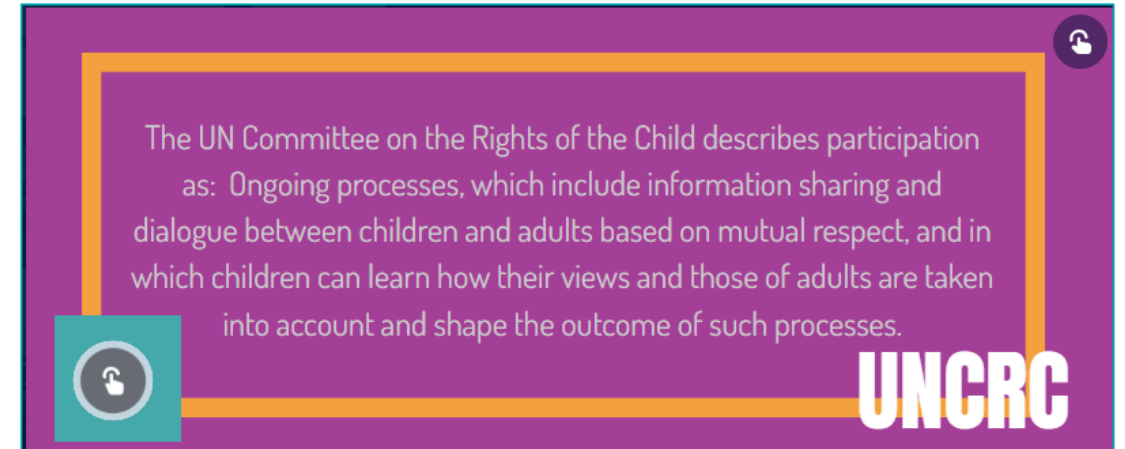
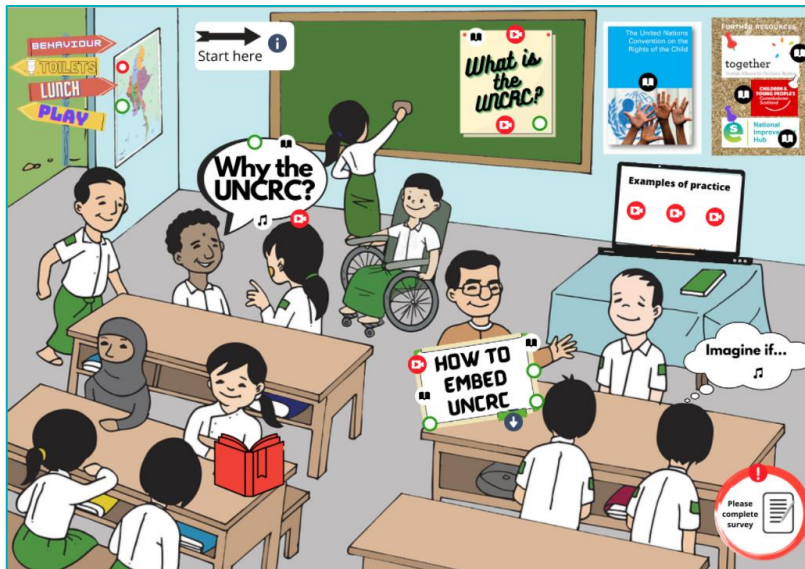
[SAC CYP Voice Report \(genial.ly\)](https://genial.ly)



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress Capturing the voice of our children and young people?

United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

Click on the image below to access the UNCRC Thinglink



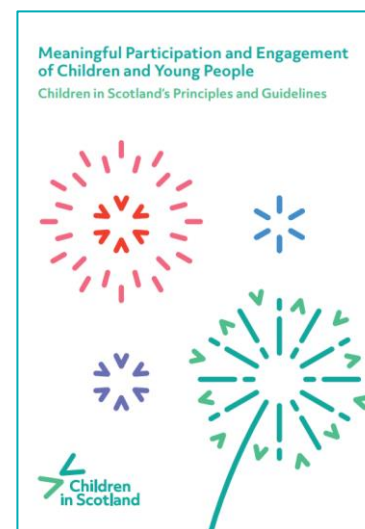
Click here to find out more: [Capturing the voice of children and young people](#)

[Youth Voice Toolkit](#) | [Resources](#) | [Education Scotland](#)

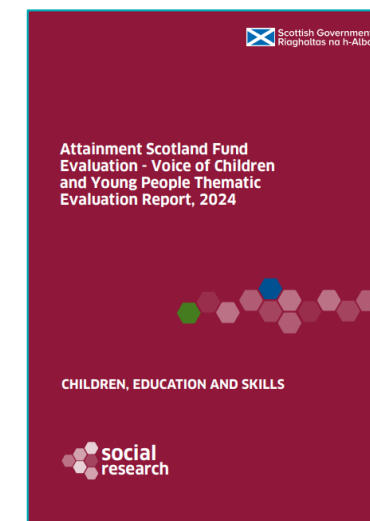
What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Capturing the voice of our children and young people

Children in Scotland: Participation

- Article 12 of the UNCRC states that children have the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously in all decisions which will affect them.
- The term participation is broadly used to describe practice, policies and methodologies which enable children to be heard in decision-making.
- Participation of children and young people is an important mechanism to ensure that, as an organisation, we are listening and communicating to our network and the wider community the views and perspectives of children and young people on a wide variety of issues.
- Children and young people should be supported to participate in decision-making in all relevant contexts and at all levels of their lives.
- These include, but are not limited to: family, alternative care, education and school, health care, prevention strategies and national and international settings.



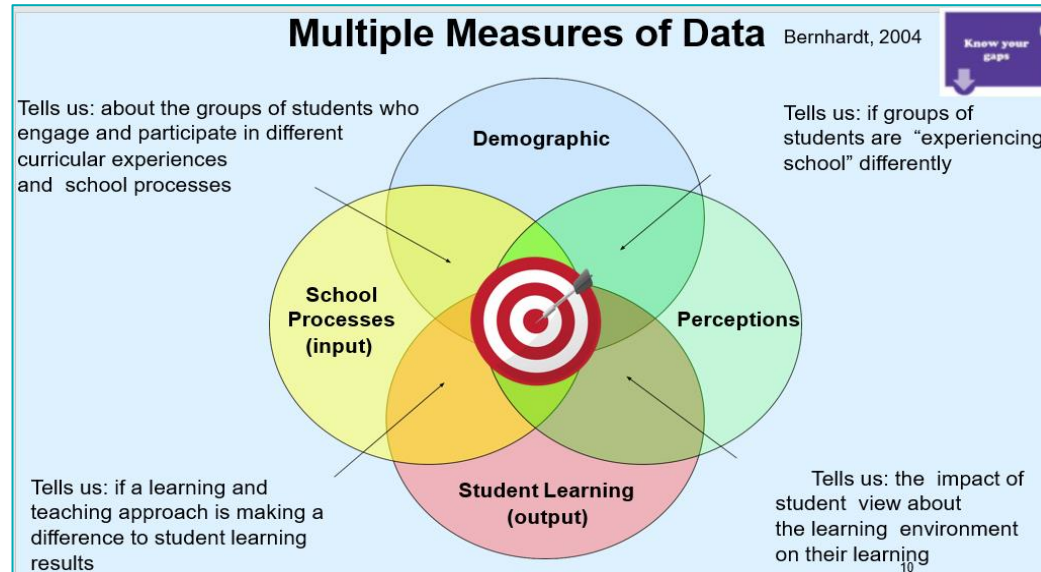
[Children in Scotland Participation-2025.pdf \(childreninscotland.org.uk\)](#) principles and guidance to engage children and young people directly in decision-making processes.



[Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation - voice of children and young people: thematic evaluation report 2024 \(gov.scot\)](#) maps out children and young people's engagement in decision-making across the Scottish Attainment Challenge to assess the extent that children and young people are engaged in decision-making.

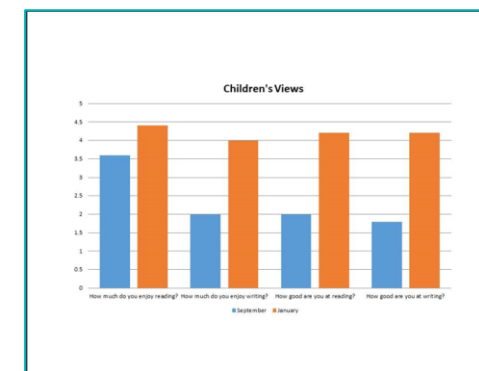
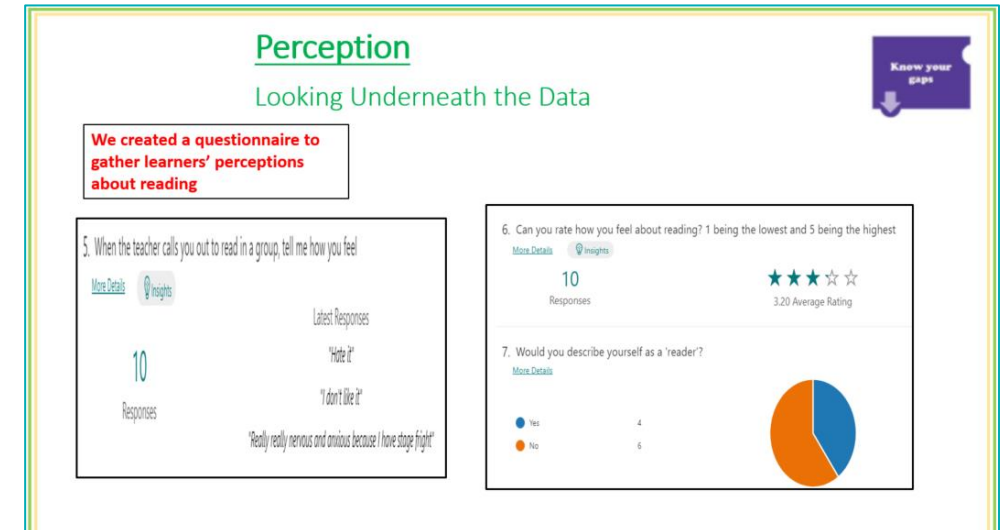
Exemplars - Capturing the voice of our children and young people

West Lothian PEF intervention example



This school used the Bernhardt model to identify a gap in reading for a group of children

Thank you to West Lothian for giving permission to share this example



The school captured the voice of the children using Microsoft forms

Exemplars

Stirling Social Justice Ambassador programme

'Social Justice Ambassador Programme – PEF' was developed alongside CLD colleagues in Stirling. The purpose of the programme is to ensure children and young people are informed and have the space to explore what poverty means to them, their school and their community. They are trained as social researchers to look into this and their research is then used to inform the decision-making around PEF for their school.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

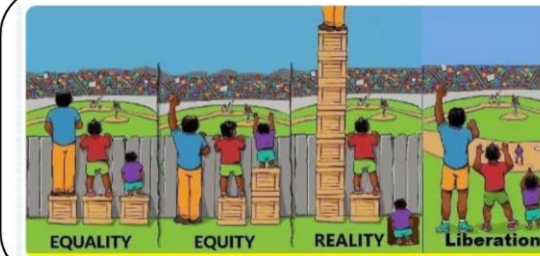
- How much money does our school get for PEF?
- What is in our school PEF plan?
- What do we think about this?

Samples of part of the programme

Thank you to Stirling for giving permission to share this example

Equity Vs Equality

Think about different people's experiences of education ...



Look at each picture

For each character think about:

- Can they see what is going on?
- Can they access the opportunity?
- Is their situation fair?

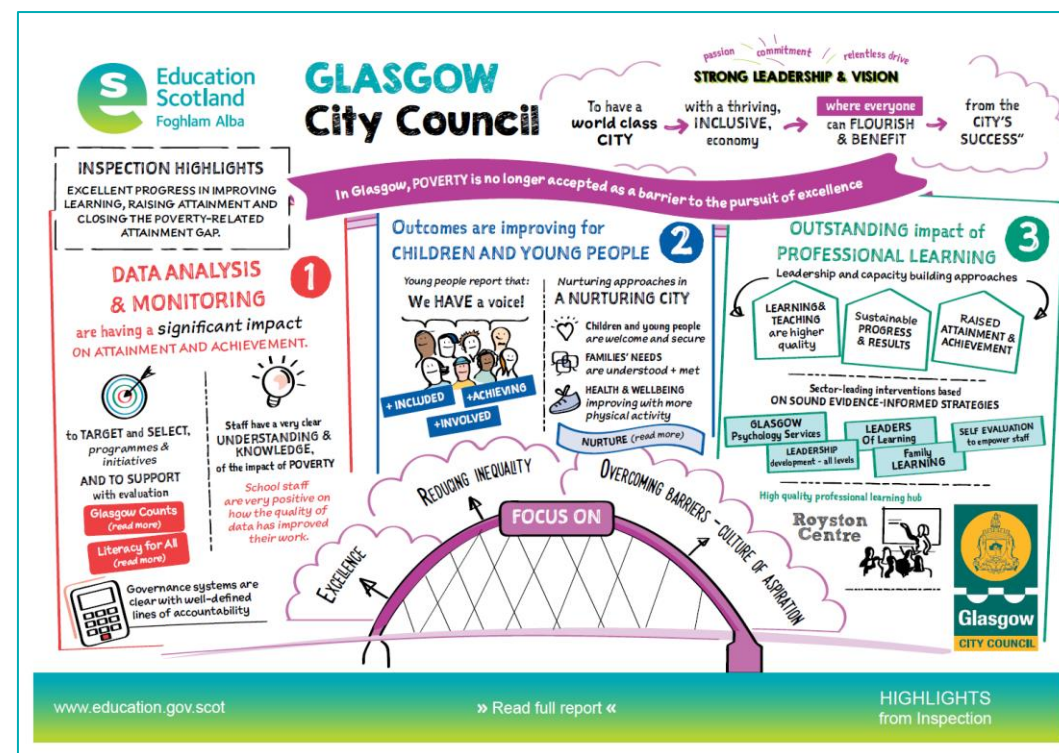
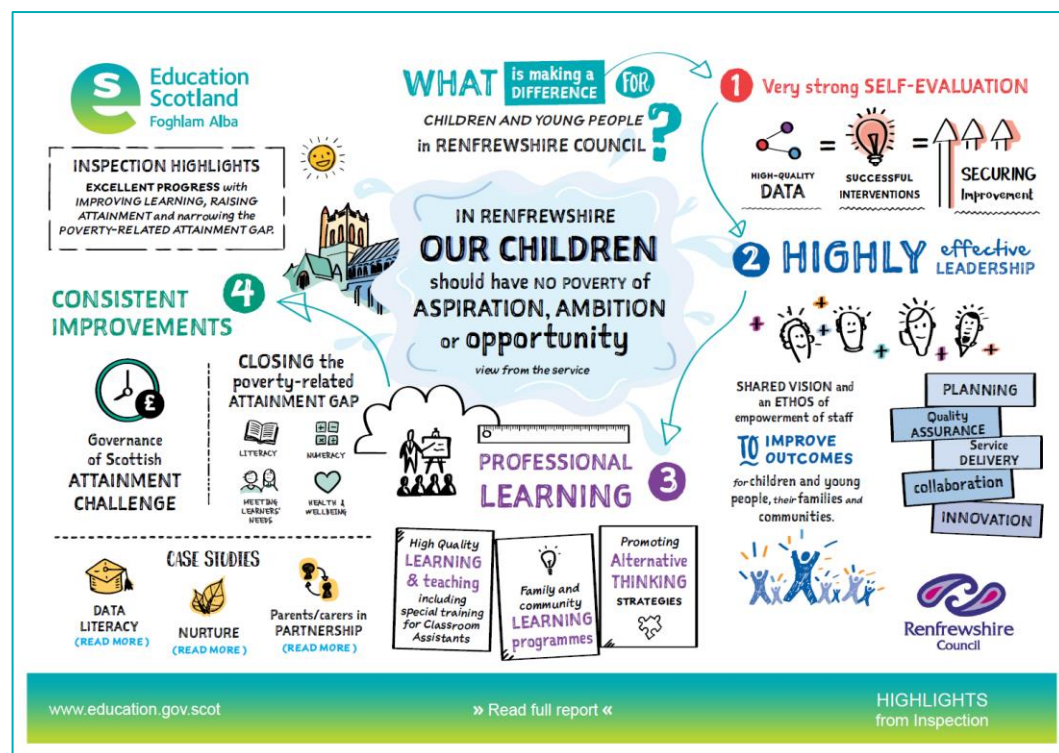
Attainment & equity

SCHOOL BUDGET & HEARING CHILDREN'S VIEWS ON HOW WE SPEND IT



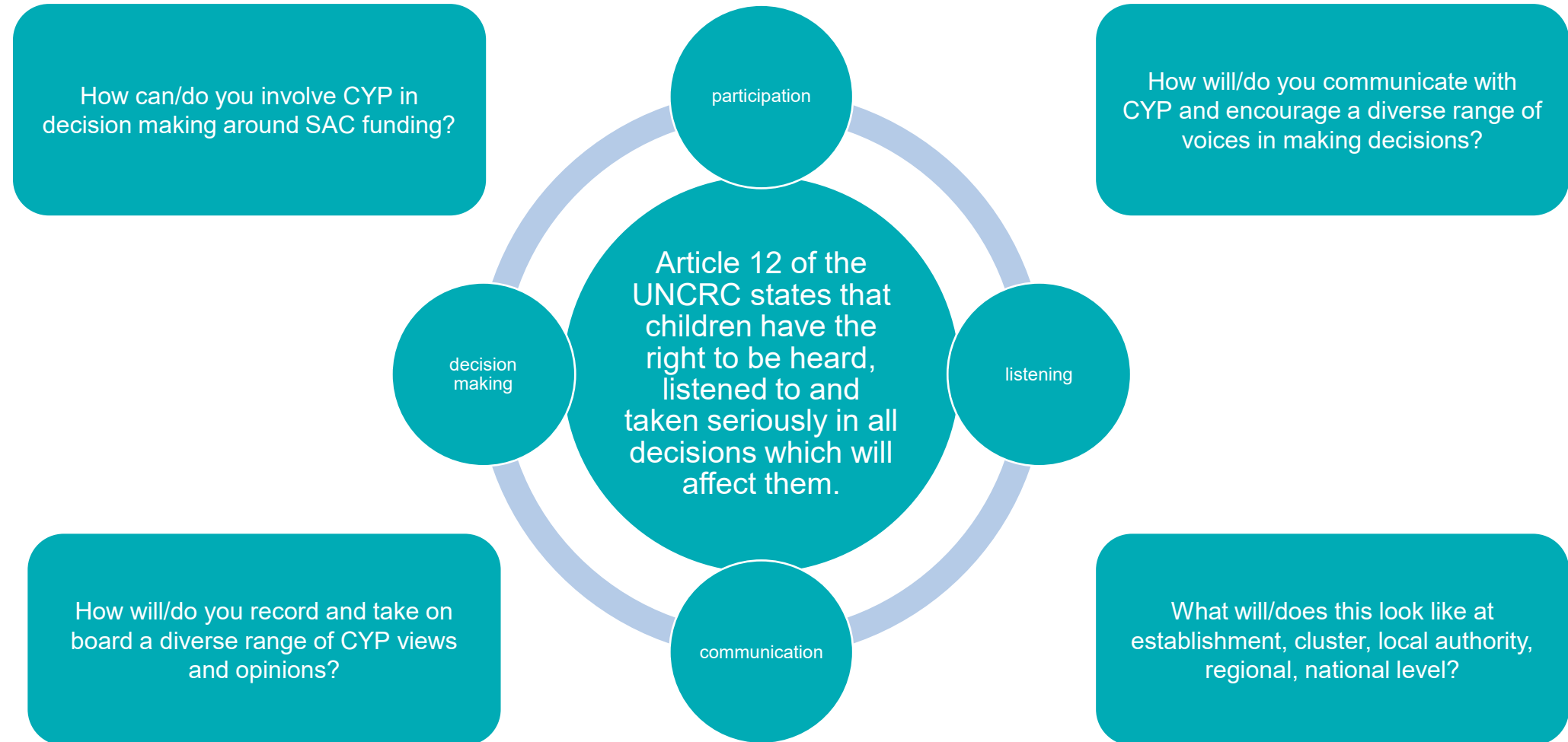
Exemplars - Capturing the voice of our children and young people

- [Sketchnote - Renfrewshire Council – Closing the Attainment Gap - February 2019 | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Sketchnote - Glasgow City Council – March 2019 | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



What to consider next?

Capturing the voice of our children and young people



Key Documents - Capturing the voice of our children and young people

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Principles and Guidance - Participation-2025.pdf \(childreninscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/Principles-and-Guidance-Participation-2025.pdf)
- [Learner Participation in Educational Settings \(3-18\)](#)
- [How good is OUR school? Part 1 \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/our-schools/How-good-is-our-school-Part-1)
- [How good is OUR school? Part 2 \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/our-schools/How-good-is-our-school-Part-2)
- [Scottish Attainment Challenge - Self-evaluation resource \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/scottish-attainment-challenge/self-evaluation-resource)
- [7 Golden Rules for use with children - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland \(cypcs.org.uk\)](https://www.cypcs.org.uk/7-golden-rules-for-use-with-children)
- [7 Golden Rules for use with young people - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland \(cypcs.org.uk\)](https://www.cypcs.org.uk/7-golden-rules-for-use-with-young-people)
- [SLF Online 2022 Capturing the voice of children and young people to meet the refreshed SAC. – YouTube](#)
- [Cost of the School Day Toolkit \(cpag.org.uk\)](https://www.cpag.org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day-toolkit)
- [Voice of the Infant Best Practice Guidelines and Infant Pledge \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/voice-of-the-infant)
- [Listening Fund – Corra \(www.corra.scot\)](https://www.corra.scot/listening-fund)
- [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation - voice of children and young people: thematic evaluation report 2024](#)
- [Youth Voice Toolkit \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/youth-voice-toolkit)

Inclusion

[Section overview](#)

[What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?](#)

[Conditions for success and sustainability](#)

[Exemplars](#)

[Useful Resources](#)

[Research and articles](#)

[Self-evaluation for equity](#)



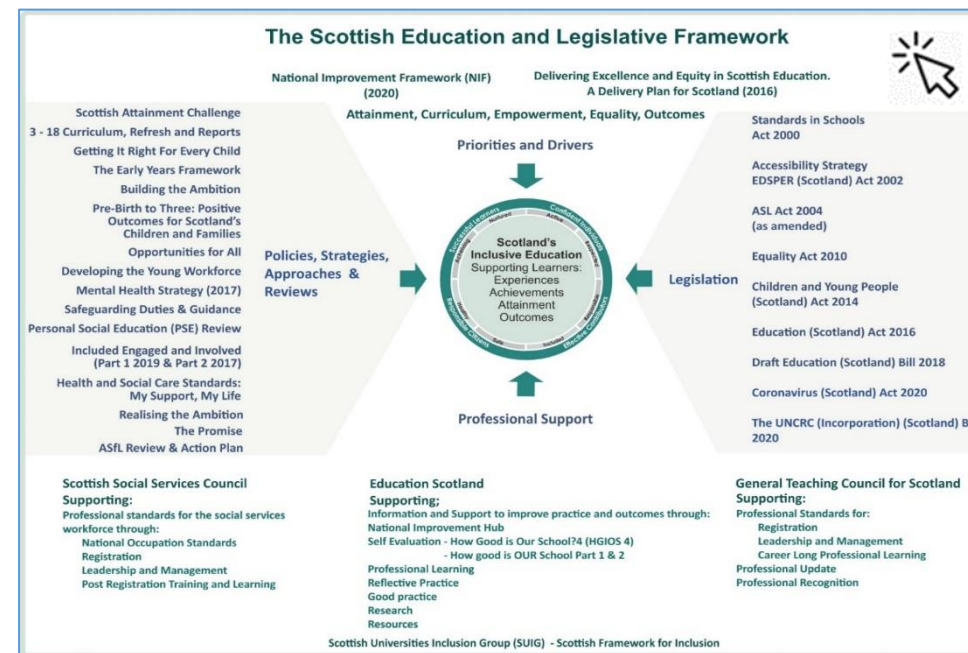
Section overview - Inclusion

Scotland's education system is rights-based and is designed to be inclusive for all children and young people in Scottish schools. This means every child and young person is entitled to support that enables them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities the Curriculum for Excellence provides. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that children and young people from diverse backgrounds, who were at greater risk of increased vulnerability, were less likely to receive the support and extra services they needed. As a result, the gap between students who experience additional barriers and those that do not, widened in some cases. There may also be considerable effects on learners' sense of belonging to schools and their feelings of self-worth – these are key for inclusion in education.

Inclusion is when everyone works to make sure all learners feel welcome and valued, and that they get the right support to help them develop their talents and achieve their goals.

This section provides information and links to policy, strategies and approaches to support equity by attending to the barriers limiting the presence and participation and achievement of learners.

Scottish context for Inclusion, Equality and Equity



Click graphic to view larger version

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Inclusion

Key findings from the [Lockdown, Lowdown: what young people in Scotland think about Covid-19 report](#) from the Scottish Youth Parliament, Youth Link Scotland & Young Scot confirm that young people have concerns about both their own mental and physical wellbeing and that of others. There is a focus on three prioritised 'golden threads' which permeate leadership, curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment: **wellbeing, collaboration and learning**.

[Wellbeing](#) of all members: headteachers, all staff; learners; families and partners to ensure a [nurturing ethos](#) where relationships are founded on mutual respect. All members feel valued and included as outlined by the UNCRC – a rights-based approach - where learners participate actively and meaningfully in the life of the school/ setting:

- support for mental, emotional & physical wellbeing
- building confidence and resilience of all members of the learning community, 3-18
- nurturing approaches across the whole establishment
- rights-based approach

[Collaboration](#) with learners; staff working together across and within the learning community, including families; CLD; youth work; third sector; local and national businesses/ employers; health & social work and active schools to improve all learners' experiences. Learning should be planned and evaluated with all partners.



Deep learning to support creativity and adaptability, problem solving, and the four capacities within:

- [digital literacy](#)
- learners leading their own learning
- where learning takes place and with whom

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Inclusion

Relationships, Rights and Participation

“[Developing positive relationships and behaviour in the classroom](#), playground and wider community is essential for creating the right environment for effective learning and teaching. Where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure and when their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated, they are more likely to develop self-confidence, resilience and positive views about themselves. This applies equally to all staff in the learning community.’ [Scottish-based research](#) indicates that good relationships and learners participating in decision-making positively affects attainment (see [Learner Participation in Educational Settings](#)). [Research](#) also suggests that relational learning environments, where high expectations and structure is balanced equally against warmth and support, encourage engagement, improve attainment, and lead to less bullying in educational settings.”. Research has demonstrated that investing time and resources into improving relationships and behaviour in establishments leads to positive outcomes around inclusion, engagement, attainment and achievement in the short-term and community safety and cohesion in the longer-term.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Inclusion – key considerations

Relationships, Rights and Participation



Keeping The Promise

The term 'care-experienced' refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after. This care may have been provided in one of many different settings such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care, or through being looked-after at home with a supervision requirement.

The incorporation of [Children's Rights](#) into Scottish Law and two highly significant reviews, The [ASL Implementation Review](#), and the [Independent Care Review](#) overlap and have implications for practitioners to refocus or reframe what and how care experienced learners are supported. The ASL review noted the significant increase in numbers of learners with ASN and complexity of needs, including those due to social, emotional and behavioural issues coinciding with an increase in poverty and inequality.

[The Promise](#) is the outcome of the Independent Care Review and through flexible, child-centred and relationship-based practice, seeks to change the way young people feel and experience care. A [status report](#) was published in 2024 to update on progress.

To ensure all care-experienced children and young people receive the vital support they need, the [Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund](#) was introduced to improve their life experiences and educational outcomes. While the funding is provided to local authorities, it can be used for young people up to the age of 26. Therefore, the statutory duty of corporate parents to collaborate should be considered to include other services and post-16 institutions and organisations.

As part of The ASL Review children and young people highlighted practice and approaches that were important to them, including:

- **Meaningful relationships** between children and young people and staff are important for learning
- **A willingness to adapt teaching methods** to children and young people's learning styles, needs, and varying pace and challenge, helps them to learn. **Using technology can be really helpful here**
- School needs to be a **safe place**. Having a choice of calm, quiet or sensory areas in all schools would help facilitate this
- All school staff need to have **more knowledge and understanding of additional support needs** so they can meet everyone's needs
- Children and young people with additional support needs **don't want to be underestimated for their ability and capability**. Their additional support need should not define them
- **Timely responses to bullying** were important for children and young people. Support for children and young people with additional support needs **must be consistent**.
- **Communication needs to improve**. Primary and secondary schools should talk more to each other. There also needs to be more communication between schools, other organisations that provide support, and children and young people

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Inclusion – key considerations

Being trauma aware

Trauma-Informed Practice is a strengths-based approach, which seeks to understand and respond to the impact of trauma on people's lives. The approach emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone and aims to empower individuals to re-establish control of their lives. Positive experiences of relationships are central to trauma recovery, whilst negative experiences in relationships can exacerbate emotional and psychological impacts. The document [Nurture, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma informed practice: Making the links between these approaches \(education.gov.scot\)](#) provides information on the key features of a nurturing approach, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma informed practice, which supports the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. This is complemented by information in the following resources:

[Trauma-Informed Practice: A Toolkit for Scotland \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[Barnardo's Scotland | All About Relationships – YouTube](#)

[Film notes - Final - digital.pdf \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

[Nurture and trauma-informed approaches: A summary of supports and resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

[The Compassionate and Connected Classroom: A health and wellbeing curricular resource for upper primary \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

[Let's Learn Together - Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Inclusion

Tackling food insecurity/ holiday programmes

Promoting a good food culture within school supports learners from lower income households to eat better and learn better. By building social capital and engaging local communities, schools can also contribute towards longer-term solutions, changing the landscape of food and poverty in their local area. [Food For Life Scotland](#) suggest actions that establishments can take to alleviate food poverty and mitigate against the negative impact on health and wellbeing caused by food insecurity, such as:

Tackling stigma through a whole school approach - by adopting a whole school approach to food, schools can normalise the decision to eat school meals among all pupils, making this choice easier in turn for those vulnerable to the effects of food poverty.

Setting up a breakfast club – the impact of breakfast clubs evidence improves cognitive performance and behaviour (Pollitt and Matthews, 1998; Wesnes et al, 2003), attendance and punctuality (Harrop & Palmer, 2002; Haras, 2005) and can support child healthy weight (Timlin et al., 2008).

[Using food as a context for raising attainment and closing the gap \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

[Breakfast for All? An Evaluation of Universal Breakfast Provision at Cauldeen Primary School, Inverness, Highland, Scotland](#)

Family Learning

The [Engaging parents and families - A toolkit for practitioners \(education.gov.scot\)](#) can be used to support raising attainment and ensuring every child and family has the same chance to thrive. The resource [Working Together - Equality and Equity Modules – Children in Scotland \(educationscotland.gov.scot\)](#) was developed to support relationships between education professionals and parents of children with additional support needs. The information in the [Families and Communities section](#) may also be useful.

Curriculum

The core principles of Scotland's curriculum and the four fundamental capacities at its centre remain critical in putting learners at the heart of education to support recovery. Scotland's curriculum provides a high degree of flexibility, empowering individual settings and practitioners to make the decisions needed to provide a curriculum that is adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and reflecting the unique nature of their communities. This includes being culturally responsive to the disproportionate impact of poverty, intensified by COVID-19. The following Education Scotland links signpost practitioners to a range of websites and resources which promote race equality education and ensure that all learners can flourish in an inclusive environment which actively promotes equality, equity and tackles racism:

[Race Equality Education – Wakelet](#)

[Promoting and developing race equality and anti-racist education](#)

[Anti-racist education](#)

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Inclusion

Additional Support and Poverty

Additional support needs (ASN) is a broad, inclusive term which covers a wide range of needs, which can be long or short term. The four factors which give rise to additional support needs is highlighted in Figure 1. It provides an overview of the interconnection between the ASfL Act 2004 (as amended 2009) and the Equality Act 2010. There is an intersection between children impacted by poverty and children who have been identified as requiring additional support. This can be observed through research and data.

‘Additional Support Needs’ is the standard terminology used in Scotland when children and young people need more – or different - support to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools to children of the same age’. A need for additional support does not imply that a child or young person lacks abilities, skills or strengths.

The highest percentage of children and young people with ASN in mainstream and in special schools are in deciles 1 (14.8%) and 2 (13.2%). This consistently decreases according to decile. ([Pupil census: supplementary statistics \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/pupils-census-supplementary-statistics)).

Poverty intersects with all four factors giving rise to additional support needs. For example, there are strong links between the experience of child poverty and poor mental health with some studies suggesting that children living in low-income households are nearly three times as likely to suffer mental health problems than their more affluent peers ([Audit Scotland, 2018](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/2018/04/audit-scotland-2018-19-mental-health)).

All care experienced children and young people who are looked after by the local authority have additional support needs unless the education authority has established through assessment that they do not (Section 17(6) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (c.36).



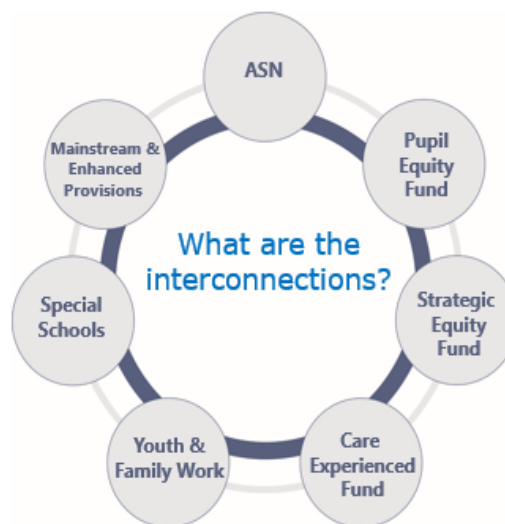
Fig 1. ASN and SAC Intersectionality

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Inclusion

Additional Support Needs

There are several ways to mitigate the experience of poverty on children and young people with ASN in Scotland. Some of the most effective strategies include:

- Providing suitable educational resources; providing children and young people with access to educational resources, such as textbooks, computers, and other materials, can help level the playing field in terms of equity and give them the tools they need to succeed in school.
- Improving access to health and nutrition support: providing children and young people with access to healthy food through mechanisms such as breakfast carts and supper/homework clubs. This can address health problems that can negatively impact their ability to participate and learn.
- Increasing access to educational support services: making additional support services, such as speech and language therapy or psychological support, more accessible and its benefits clearly understood by all involved in supporting learners needs. This ensures that children with ASN receive the support they need, in order to make the progress they can.



- Signposting to children, young people, and communities to tackle the root causes of poverty. Financial pathways: providing advice and guidance around income maximisation, and income support can help families to meet their basic needs and reduce the financial stress that can negatively impact children and young people's well-being and ability to learn.
- Building a school curriculum that develops suitable pathways for children and young people to maximise their talents and interests while removing the barriers to learning that poverty can create around the curriculum: Cost of the School Day and poverty of opportunity. Improving access to employment through robust and contextual partnership working, that increases opportunity for all.
- Collaboration between National, regional, local authorities, schools, and communities to understand the barriers to learning that poverty creates for children and young people with additional support needs and implement these strategies to improve the experiences of children, young people and their families with ASN. By doing so, they can help to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to reach their full potential and succeed in life.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Inclusion

Included, Engaged and Involved

Some studies show that missing 10% or four weeks over the course of a year is linked to lower levels of attainment; affects peer relationships; emotional and behavioural difficulties, poorer employment opportunities and involvement in offending behaviour. Therefore, absences have longer term effects beyond school achievement and there is a need to address school absenteeism to reduce future labour market inequalities.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual learners and their families. Some learners find it harder than others to attend school. Therefore, at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with learners and parents to remove any barriers by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Ensuring consistent attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practice for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including PEF. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across the school community.

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families looks at the topic of [emotionally-based school avoidance](#) and shares ideas to help education staff address the issue. The [EEF](#) also provide research and evidence on interventions that support attendance. The documentary – [Excluded](#) - features the voices of young people – those who are most affected by exclusion – who share their stories and views on this complex issue, which is useful when considering children's rights.

Some suggested features to support consistent attendance are:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

The links below provide further information and support on attendance and engagement:

- [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Improving Attendance in Scotland's Schools - gov.scot](#)
- [Improving attendance in Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Forth Valley and West Lothian toolkit, Improving attendance in Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Strategic approaches to improving attendance, Effective use of data, Improving attendance in Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Promoting good attendance - Development of plans, policies and guidance \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Conditions for success and sustainability - Inclusion

Embedding **inclusive values and ethos within the setting or establishment** is essential to the ongoing delivery of inclusive educational practice. Values and ethos which recognise and value diversity and include a strong commitment to enabling and supporting all children and young people to learn and be part of school life are fundamental and can mitigate against harmful attitudes, which can be powerful barriers.

Strong leadership is required to promote inclusive ethos and values throughout the school community. Leadership does not only rest with the head of an establishment or setting – distributed leadership at all levels is required to deliver change and progress. Staff should be empowered and challenged to use their knowledge of the children and young people to drive inclusive practice.

Effective evaluation of planning processes ensures improved outcomes for all learners. Effective tracking and monitoring of learning outcomes over time, aligned to review of support and teaching and learning strategies will ensure progress in learning for all pupils.

Having **capacity to deliver inclusion** is crucial. Working with partners to deliver joint training and services builds capacity of those in schools and other services. Special schools can provide key support to their mainstream colleagues through experience of a range of highly personalised approaches including personalised learning, behavioural strategies and tailored support which may be beneficial for all pupils.

Strong positive relationships are essential to embedding approaches to parental and family engagement - not only between partners but with families themselves.

Investing time to develop and maintain authentic collaboration and partnerships. Practitioners and partners should be informed and proactive to mitigate the impacts of socio-economic circumstances as part of removing barriers to learning.

A **data culture** empowers practitioners to regularly review and intersect information to identify learners impacted by poverty, their gaps and the underlying barriers leading to those gaps. Effective use of data will also support robust monitoring and evaluation of progress and the impact of approaches and interventions.

Embedding a culture of '[listening well](#)' ensures a positive impact on mental resilience, confidence and wellbeing is permeated within and across teams.

'Listening must start with the assumption that it will lead to change.'

Exemplars - Inclusion

- [Using food as a context for raising attainment and closing the gap \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Managing change - St Roch's Primary and Deaf School in Glasgow | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [English as an additional language at Holyrood Secondary School. Promoting improvement through sharing highly effective practice \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Educational exclusion and inclusion - common themes from the Improving Life Chances Implementation Group \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Attendance Matters at Smithycroft Secondary School - Glasgow City Council \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- ['How to' examples of improving attendance through partnership working \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Developing a culture of inclusion and equality - Auchinleck Academy \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Communities that care: whole-school approach \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Embedding the Pupil Equity Fund within whole school inclusive approaches, St Ninians High School \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Neurodiversity and wellbeing at Strathmore Primary School | Promoting improvement through sharing highly effective practice \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [Embedding nurture principles at Loch Primary School | Promoting improvement through sharing highly effective practice \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)
- [The Discover programme, Edinburgh | Challenging Poverty | Resources \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)

Useful resources - Inclusion

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [OECD Tackling the School Absenteeism Crisis 30 April 2024 | PPT \(slideshare.net\)](#)
- [Race Equality Education – Wakelet](#)
- [Inclusion in Practice: The CIRCLE Framework - Secondary | Resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [CALL Scotland: using inclusive digital technologies to raise attainment for learners who require additional support \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Working Together - Equality and Equity Modules – Children in Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [National Conference: From Poverty to Flourishing, 2022 \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Recognising and realising children's rights: A PLR to promote self-evaluation and improvement planning \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [PEF: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Additional support needs in ELC \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Research and articles - Inclusion

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [Socioeconomic Inequalities in School Attendance in Scotland.pdf \(strath.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Effective Intervention for school refusal behaviour \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](#)
- [Ensuring our future: addressing the impact of COVID-19 on children, young people and their families \(scotphn.net\)](#)
- [An Introduction to Inclusive Education \(open.edu\)](#)
- [‘Education Reimagined: The Future of Learning’, Fullan, M., Quinn, J., Drummy, M., Gardner, M. \(2020\)](#)
- [Supporting children with additional support needs \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Final Report -The Impact of Covid-19 on Children's Care Processes in Scotland \(scadr.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Nourish to flourish report: food, fun and family learning \(childreninscotland.org.uk\)](#)
- [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation - readiness to learn: thematic evaluation report 2024 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Relationships and behaviour in schools: national action plan 2024 to 2027 - gov.scot](#)

Pupil Equity Funding

Section overview

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Conditions for success and sustainability

Exemplars

Useful Resources

Research and articles

Self-evaluation for equity

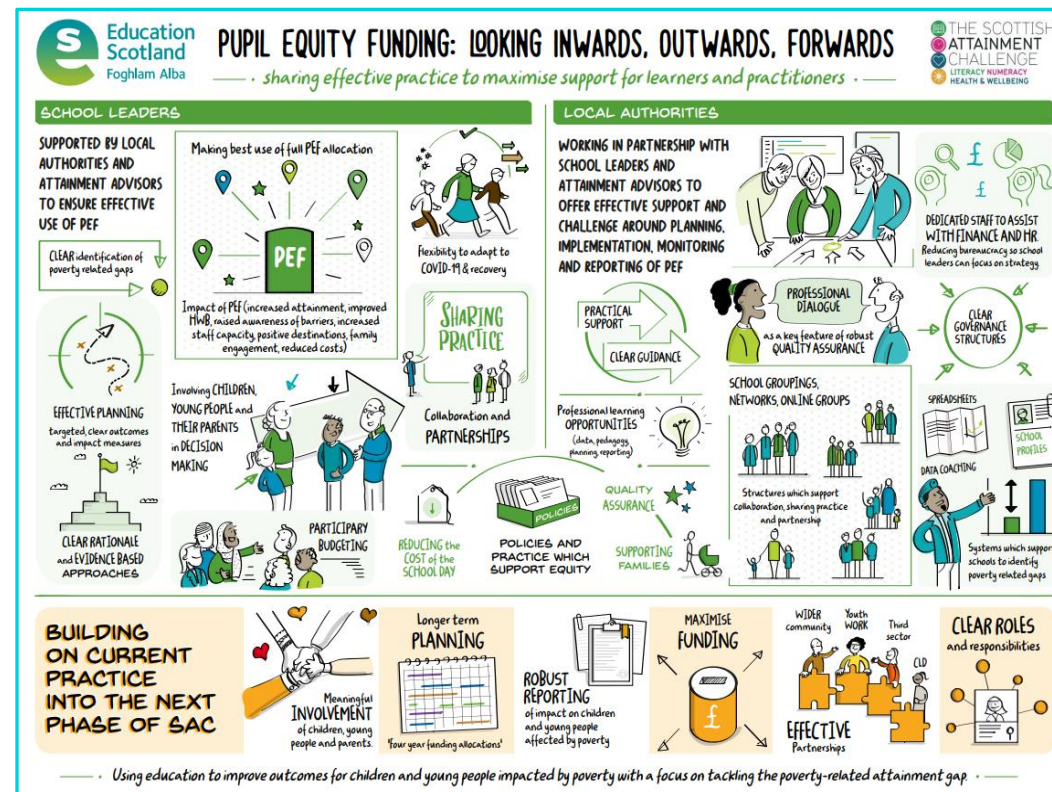


Section overview - Pupil Equity Funding

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is an additional resource allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. This section of the toolkit is to support schools to maximise the impact of PEF to accelerate progress in closing that gap. Funding allocations for each year from 2022/23 to 2025/26 have been confirmed to enable long term planning.

This section has a focus on:

- National guidance
- Planning for effective use of PEF
- Collaboration
- Evidence-based approaches
- Sharing exemplars and useful links



Click on sketch note to view full version

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

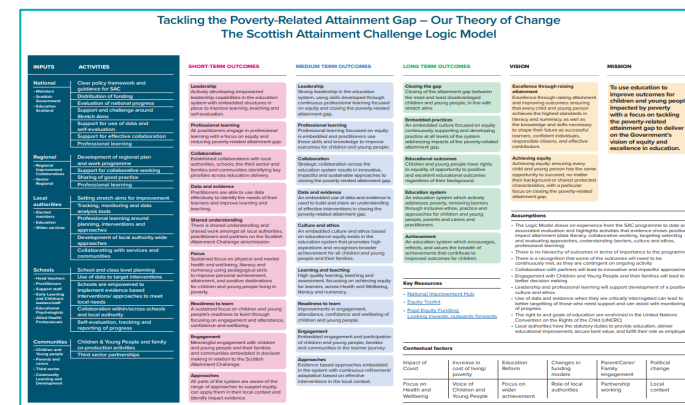
Pupil Equity Funding

National guidance

National guidance, including PEF National Operational Guidance, is intended to help schools plan how they will most effectively invest their Pupil Equity Funding allocation to accelerate progress in improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

The most recent national guidance can be accessed using the links below:

- [Pupil Equity Funding National Operational Guidance](#)
- [Pupil Equity Funding: school allocations](#)
- [Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards – sharing effective practice to maximise support for learners and practitioners](#)
- [Scottish Attainment Challenge: framework for recovery and accelerating progress](#)
- [Scottish Attainment Challenge - theory of change and logic model](#)
- [Strategic Equity and Care Experienced Children and Young People 2026 Report \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding National Operational Guidance 2026/2027 - gov.scot](#)
- [Strategic Equity Funding National Operational Guidance 2026/27 - gov.scot](#)



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Pupil Equity Funding

Planning for effective use of PEF

Schools should consider each element when planning for PEF.



Collaborative:

Actively engage children, young people, families, communities, staff and partners in planning process.



Evidence informed:

Plans are based on data and a clear understanding of the context of communities they will be implemented. This data should include: local & national data and reference to research including SAC Theory of Change and Logic Model.



Setting ambitious and SMART aims:

Aims should be smart, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. They also need to be ambitious enough to achieve long term goals of closing poverty-related attainment gaps.



Measuring progress:

SMART measures and baseline data are needed to be able to show progress towards aims. Regular tracking and monitoring will support staff respond timeously to interventions which are not having the desired impact and make adaptations.



Evaluative:

All plans should have aims and measures which allow leaders to clearly state whether aims have been achieved.



Quality assurance processes embedded

to support the development and implementation of SAC plans. This can be both internal or external, involve peers or senior leaders.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Pupil Equity Funding

Planning for effective use of PEF



[Data and the poverty-related attainment gap - YouTube](#)

This professional learning session explores:

- the poverty-related attainment gap and why we need to close it;
- how we measure the poverty-related attainment gap;
- the role of data in closing the poverty-related attainment gap;
- the types of data that you might use;
- how and why data should be intersected;
- some practical classroom examples; and
- the importance of creating a positive data culture.



[Outcomes and measures webinar - YouTube](#)

This professional learning session explores:

- what is meant by the term outcomes and measures;
- why outcomes and measures are important;
- how to create well-defined outcomes;
- how to identify appropriate measures; and
- how to engage with measures to ensure impact.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Pupil Equity Funding

Collaboration with learner and families

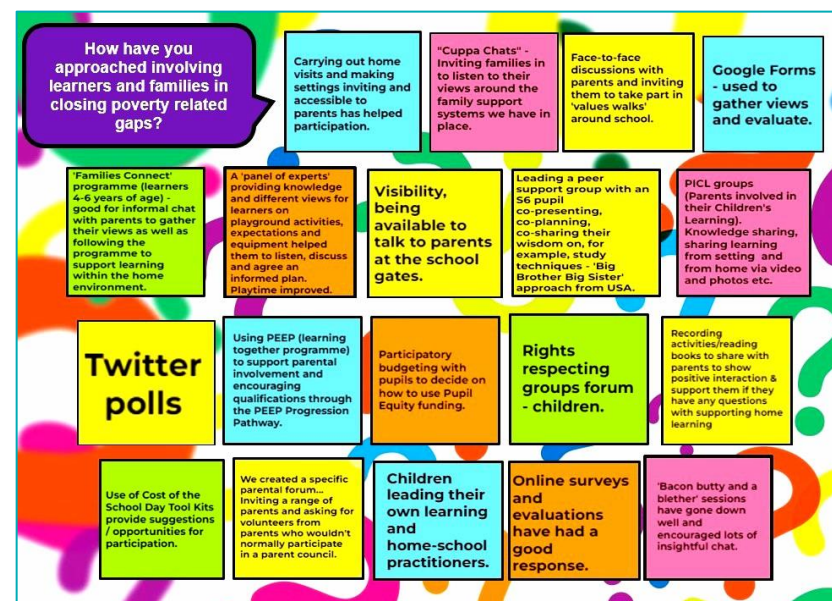
The PEF: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards report shares examples of current practice from across Scotland to support schools to engage meaningfully with learners and their families.

- [Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards – sharing effective practice to maximise support for learners and practitioners](#)

Other resources to support collaboration with learners and families include:

- [Participatory Budgeting in educational establishments | Learning resources \(Education Scotland\)](#)
- [Scottish Attainment Challenge Capturing CYP Voice](#)
- [Learner Participation in Educational Settings \(3-18\) | Self-evaluation \(Education Scotland\)](#)

Schools shared the following approaches to engaging with learners and families at an Education Scotland webinar.



[School suggestions on engaging learners and their families](#)

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Pupil Equity Funding



[Effective Multi Agency Practice: Considering Community Approaches - YouTube](#)

This professional learning session considers:

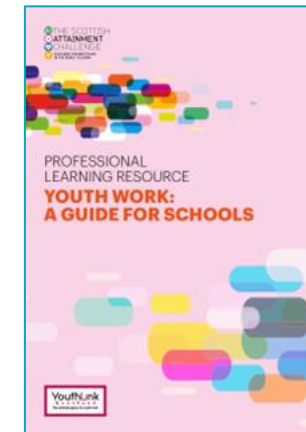
- the definition and benefits of multi-agency partnerships for schools, learners and the community;
- recent reports that highlight why multi-agency practice is critical in closing the poverty-related attainment gap and accelerating educational recovery.

In the presentation we hear from practitioners leading on projects across Scotland who have developed innovative service models that evidence multi-agency practice to address the needs of local families.

Dundee City Council

Read about the effective partnership between Dundee City Council's Children and Families Service (secondary schools and Dundee City Council's Neighbourhood Services (Communities: CLD Youth Work) using this link:

- [The role of youth work in closing the poverty-related attainment gap - Dundee City Council | Practice exemplars \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



[YouthLink Scotland | Youth Work: A Guide for Schools](#)

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Pupil Equity Funding



[Evidenced Based Interventions - YouTube](#)

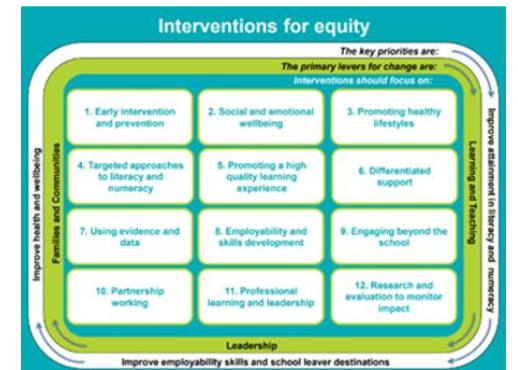
The session explores:

- the importance of contextual analysis in choosing approaches and interventions;
- existing evidence on 'what works to close poverty-related attainment gaps; and
- the role of effective implementation for interventions to be successful and have impact.

As the Toolkit does not provide definitive answers, it should not be used in isolation. Your professional judgement and expertise is also needed to move from the information in the Toolkit to an evidence-informed decision about what will work best in your school.

The 'Interventions for equity' resource on the National Improvement Hub and the Education Endowment Foundation's Teaching and Learning Toolkit provide examples of approaches that have been used in schools. The toolkits do not provide definitive answers and alongside the toolkits, schools should consider what will work in their setting. When identifying which approach(es) to take, decision-making should focus on robust evidence from self-evaluation and effective analysis of school data.

[Interventions for Equity: Self-evaluation \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



[Teaching and Learning Toolkit: EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Conditions for success and sustainability - Pupil Equity Funding

Research identifies 6 broad principles which can be used to support schools and local authorities to consider their use of PEF to recalibrate equity and support educational recovery.

- Impact of COVID-19
- Prioritise re-engagement
- Identify those learners most affected by poverty & COVID-19
- Intensify support in the short-term for learners identified
- High quality universal and targeted provision is vital
- Long term strategic vision still required

The links below provide more information on these.

- [Recalibrating Equity and Social Justice \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/Recalibrating-Equity-and-Social-Justice)
- [Recalibrating Equity and Social Justice in Scottish Education](#)



Exemplars - Pupil Equity Funding

Exemplars can be found on the [Education Scotland website](#) and in the 'Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards' report. The [PEF: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards report](#) is intended to support school leaders and local authority staff as they further develop and refine their approaches to PEF. Each section reflects on a different aspect of PEF practice and provides examples of approaches being employed across the country. It is hoped this sharing of practice will help staff involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of PEF to reflect and build on their current practice.

Further examples are highlighted in the [Improving Equity Case Studies](#), which evidence practice that is improving equity at either service, cluster or establishment level from all 32 local authorities.

The [Pupil Equity Funding 2025 Report](#), deepens the understanding of how PEF is improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap. The report was developed from synthesising evidence and experiences from 129 schools across all 32 local authorities.

The [Interventions for Equity Framework](#) is based on a range of interventions and approaches that are currently being use in schools across Scotland. These will provide a helpful stimulus for planning discussions based on your own robust self-evaluation.

On the [Youthlink Scotland](#) website, you'll find recent examples of partnership working that is making a positive difference to young people's experience of education across Scotland and improving attainment as a result. Click on the graphic to access further information.

Using Pupil Equity Funding to support partnership with youth work

"Alongside schools youth work improves the wellbeing, readiness to learn and educational outcomes of children and young people". (PEF National Operational Guidance 2023)

This resource is designed to assist Headteachers in using Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) by providing examples of PEF-funded youth work and school partnerships that have very effectively improved outcomes for young people.

Headteachers are encouraged to work collaboratively with youth work partners to develop effective plans and approaches to utilising PEF to improve educational outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty and enhance progress towards the delivery of the SAC (Scottish Attainment Challenge) mission. This includes approaches within the school and across the learning community and working together to measure impact. Investment of PEF in youth work can provide schools with the opportunity to enhance, scale or introduce new approaches to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap within the school, and across the learning community.

"Headteachers should endeavour to work in partnership with their local community partners, such as youth work and community learning and development, to develop approaches to utilising the funding to best effect".

The Scottish Attainment Challenge: Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (www.gov.scot)

Further guidance on the role of youth work in Scottish education can be found in [Youth Work: A Guide for Schools](#).

Improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty:

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT	SKILLS FOR LEARNING, LIFE AND WORK	ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT	POSITIVE DESTINATIONS
"When I was going through a lot she helped me and now I'm better" - young person from Lundsava Primary School, Highland	"I know where to come when I am angry and need quiet time and I like making new friends in the clubs" - young person from Pappale Primary School, Orkney	"It makes me feel a lot more focused" - young person from Newbattle High School, Midlothian	"I couldn't imagine a school without youth work" - young person from St Mulline's Academy, Glasgow	"I used to skip a lot but now I enjoy coming to school" - young person from Braes High School, Falkirk

Further information and support

YouthLink Scotland delivers one of the Scottish Attainment Challenge national programmes on behalf of Scottish Government. Our programme is tasked with strengthening collaboration between schools and youth work. For more information or to discuss how we can support your partnerships with youth work please get in touch with Marielle Bruce mbruce@youthlink.scot

READ ALL THE CASE STUDIES HERE:

youthlink.scot/education-skills/scottish-attainment-challenge/#pupil-equity-funding

youthscotland.org.uk • youthlink.scot

Useful resources - Pupil Equity Funding

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Pupil attainment: closing the gap - Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 – 2025/2026](#)
- [Scottish Attainment Challenge: framework for recovery and accelerating progress](#)
- [Tackling poverty-related attainment gap - Scottish Attainment Challenge logic model](#)
- [Effective use of data \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards – sharing effective practice to maximise support for learners and practitioners](#)
- [Delivering equity and closing the poverty related attainment gap | Learning resources \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Using Food for Thought and Pupil Equity Funding at Bantaskin Primary School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Improving equity case studies 2024 \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Research and articles - Pupil Equity Funding

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Reducing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap - Evidence Review of Mentoring and Tutoring | The Robertson Trust](#)
- [Tackling child poverty priority families overview - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) - An overview of evidence on the six priority family types identified as being at higher risk of child poverty
- [Poverty in rural Scotland: evidence review \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Attainment Scotland Fund 2022-2026 evaluation: analytical plan - year 2 2023 -2024 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [ASF Evaluation Thematic Reports | YouthLink Scotland](#)
- [Attainment Scotland Fund \(ASF\) Evaluation Summative report, 2026 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Strategic Equity and Care Experienced Children and Young People 2026 Report, Scottish Government \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Professional Learning

Section overview

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

Useful resources

Research and articles

Self-evaluation for equity



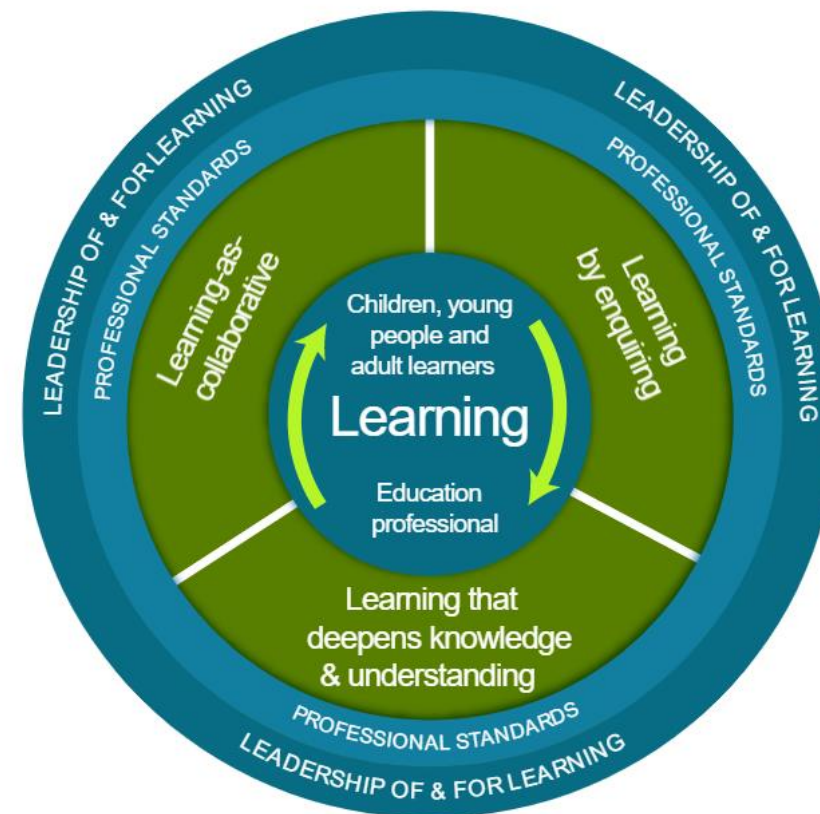
Section overview - Professional Learning

The [interventions for equity](#) highlights promoting and participating in professional learning and developing practice has significant impact on improving outcomes for learners. Professional learning to improve equity requires attending to the beliefs of practitioners. In the context of adult learning and how practitioners grow and change, it is more than knowledge and skills that are required to be considered. It is necessary to address beliefs, attitudes, values, and assumptions. If the [unconscious bias](#) of practitioners, whether about specific learners in their establishments or their own efficacy, is not considered, it can be difficult to transform practice or sustain the implementation of new learning. This section provides dual purpose:

- considerations for practitioners when designing professional learning, and
- professional learning opportunities for practitioners to support their own career long professional learning.

This section also includes information and links to research and useful resources to support equity, including recent publications and upcoming events featured in the Spotlighting Equity sways, archived content to support recovery and accelerate progress of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and reflective questions and useful resources.

The [national model of professional learning](#) (opposite) identifies the key principles and features of effective learning that will build capacity and promote collaborative practices.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Professional Learning

Practitioner-led professional learning is important for teaching for equity to be rooted in the needs of learners, paying particular attention to the unique context of schools and other settings. Practitioners should also experience professional learning that meaningfully meets their needs (Skerrett, Warrington, & Williamson, 2018). Skerrett et al. (2018) identified six features to support professional development, which addresses equity within the design:

- practitioner-identified and driven;
 - presented by a skilled facilitator who value the practitioners' expertise;
 - context where the practitioner can be the leader of learning, and the learner;
 - sustained over time with continued further learning;
 - fosters meaningful collaborative relationships with others in the community;
 - and includes support from those with the capital to facilitate change.
- [Equity: Mitigating the impact of poverty on children and young people | Leading professional learning | Professional Learning | Education Scotland](#)

[Research by Anne Burns Thomas](#) included:

- establishing a network of practitioners engaged in a common goal and providing practical examples of what equity and [social justice education](#) looks like, feels like and sounds like supports capacity building to improve outcomes for learners.
- the importance of collaborating with others who share similar goals and the significance of practitioner-led professional learning should focus on the context of the establishment in response to challenges in the setting, at home and in the community. In turn this develops greater understanding of social and educational inequity and promotes collaboration across boundaries.

Professional learning for equity, when meaningfully designed and delivered provides opportunities to disrupt and dismantle societal barriers. Deeper learning creates opportunities for learners to interrogate issues, develop critical thinking skills, and build a sense of agency and belief. The research points to a developing framework for teaching for equity and deeper learning as one that includes, learning that engages children and young people in thinking about and exploring questions related to their immediate lived experiences.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Professional Learning

There are four considerations when designing professional learning for equity that have the potential to positively disrupt practitioner and learner experiences:

- teacher professional learning for equity should be centred on content related to equity and social justice;
- teacher professional learning should model instructional practices that promote equity;
- create a culture of inquiry and ownership to promote a school ecosystem informed by equitable approaches;
- invite learner voices into the conversation to understand the impact of practitioners' professional learning

Data suggests that when practitioners are steeped in professional learning that explores issues of equity and pedagogy, and models equitable practices, learners are more likely to experience that practice in the classroom.

Coaching and peer mentoring is an effective way of ensuring the learning intentions from activities are implemented in practice.

Case studies are useful at helping practitioners reflect and align what they planned and designed the professional learning for, and how it was applied and implemented in classrooms and other settings to determine impact.

Invite **learner voices** to understand practitioners' professional learning. Learner voice is often left out but can be key to understanding the impact of professional learning.

Useful resources - Professional Learning

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Equality and Equity Toolkit \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/equality-equity-toolkit)
- [Improving Gender Balance Scotland \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/improving-gender-balance-scotland)
- [Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/inclusion-wellbeing-equalities-professional-learning-framework)
- [Delivering equity and closing the poverty related attainment gap Resources \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/delivering-equity-closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-resources)
- [Professional Learning \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/professional-learning)
- [Equity: Mitigating the impact of poverty on children and young people \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/equity-mitigating-impact-poverty-children-young-people)

Research and articles - Professional Learning

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [Ten Steps to Equity in Education OECD Policy Brief 2008](https://www.oecd.org/policy/briefs/ten-steps-to-equity-in-education-oecd-policy-brief-2008)
- [teachingforequityanddeeperlearning.pdf \(montclair.edu\)](https://www.montclair.edu/~teachingforequityanddeeperlearning.pdf) – academic paper (Meg Riordan, Emily J. Klein & Catherine Gaynor (2019): Teaching for Equity and Deeper Learning: How Does Professional Learning Transfer to Teachers' Practice and Influence Students' Experiences?, Equity & Excellence in Education, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2019.164780)
- [Recalibrating Equity and Social Justice in Scottish Education: Bouncing forward after COVID-19 lockdowns \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/recalibrating-equity-social-justice-scottish-education-bouncing-forward-after-covid-19-lockdowns)

Implementation

Section overview

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

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Self-evaluation for equity



Section overview - Implementation

The Scottish Attainment Challenge has provided opportunity for practitioners to explore and test innovation to improve outcomes for learners. As a result, there is evidence of interventions and services - where successfully implemented and embedded - have led to local improvements and reduced variation in outcomes ([Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards \(education.gov.scot\)](#)). A fundamental aspect of improvement is implementation, yet it is an area of practice that is largely overlooked.

The principle of equity, whilst systemically understood, rarely features as part of planning for implementation. To support ongoing recovery from COVID-19 it is important to understand how implementation is best considered when planning approaches, interventions and services. Therefore, to address recovery and advance equity, practitioners should engage in a consistent process of knowledge development, intervention selection, and use of implementation strategies. We must also critically assess the gaps between the intentions and the impact of our work.

“one of the most critical problems our schools face is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation, overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical and uncoordinated acceptance of too many different innovations”

(Fullan and Stiegelbauer)

[Equitable implementation](#) requires us to engage in [social justice inquiry](#) of our work and pursue fair, restorative, and equitable outcomes. Equitable implementation occurs when strong equity components, including explicit attention to the culture, history, values, and needs of a community are integrated into the principles and tools of implementation, and its associated science ([Allison Metz, Beadsie Woo & Audrey Loper, 2021](#)).

The purpose of this section is to equip practitioners with baseline knowledge and concepts of Implementation Science and practical steps, which support equity. The content is intended to create curiosity and stimulate professional dialogue and offers dual purpose:

- to provide opportunity to engage in further professional reading, research and enquiry.
- to provide practical considerations and steps for practitioners and establishments to implement and manage change effectively.

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Implementation

What is implementation?

Implementation is “a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program” (Fixen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). These activities occur over time, in stages that overlap and are revisited as required.

Why implementation?

Have you ever wondered why a new approach, practice or service never seemed to achieve the outcomes you or your team had hoped for? What was missing? Resources? Training? Support? Effective implementation is more than a contributing factor in setting interventions up for success. The quality of implementation plays a significant part in achieving outcomes. If an approach or intervention is implemented poorly or even moderately well, its goals are unlikely to be achieved, or the results will be less significant.

‘It is a truism that people cannot benefit from innovations they do not experience. That is, if innovations are not used as intended, they cannot produce the intended results’

Fixsen, Blase, and Van Dyke 2019

What is Implementation Science?

Implementation science is the study of how evidence-based programmes can be embedded to maximise successful outcomes ([Kelly and Perkins, 2012](#)).

Adopting new practice and approaches requires change. Implementation science recognises that people need to be ready for change and that creating the right conditions for an intervention is key to how it is delivered and sustained over time. Therefore, implementation science is fundamental to the design of successful interventions. To understand true effectiveness, both the intervention and its implementation need to be evaluated to fully understand outcomes and impacts (Kelly and Perkins, 2012). Although implementation science has been employed for some time in health and community settings, its application within education is still relatively new and there are many areas for further research (Lyon et al., 2018).

Is there a difference between Improvement Science and Implementation Science?

In a word yes. Implementation science and improvement science have similar endpoints, but different starting points and academic perspectives. They have similar goals of improving practice and services to improve outcomes. However, a fundamental difference between quality improvement and implementation science is that the former generates knowledge for local improvement, whereas the latter is aimed at producing more general scientific knowledge ([Frontiers | Bridging the Silos: A Comparative Analysis of Implementation Science and Improvement Science \(frontiersin.org\)](#)).

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Implementation

Overview of Implementation Science

[The National Implementation Research Network](#) developed five overarching frameworks referred to as Active Implementation Frameworks:

- [Framework 1: Usable Innovations](#)
- [Framework 2: Implementation Stages](#) (exploration, installation, initial implementation and full implementation)
- [Framework 3: Implementation Drivers](#)
- [Framework 4: Implementation Teams](#)
- [Framework 5: Improvement Cycles \(PDSA\)](#)

A helpful one-page overview of the frameworks can be found [here](#). Each Active Implementation framework contains information and tools, which integrate and compensate each other. A series of modules designed for independent learning, cohorts or in-service training can be accessed [here](#). They include content, activities and assessments designed to promote the knowledge and practice of implementation science and scaling-up.

What is fidelity?

Implementation fidelity refers to the extent to which an intervention or programme is delivered as intended.

Active Implementation Formula

It is important to start with the end in mind. In the active implementation formula (below), positive outcomes for learners represent the 'why' in the equation. It is why we want to improve instructional practice and behaviours. The 'what' in the equation is an effective approach. We need to know what it is that is going to be implemented to create the infrastructure to support the approach and ensure once in place, is being used as intended, and producing outcomes (fidelity).



How will this be done? The implementation infrastructure is the 'how' and the next component of the equation. Competency, Organisation, and Leadership Drivers are in service to Fidelity to achieve improved outcomes. Supporting activities such as coaching, training or feedback should always be in service to the practice, or change, you want to see on the ground."

[SISEP Video Series: Active Implementation Formula - YouTube](#)



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Implementation

Coaching

“[Coaching](#) is a necessary component for promoting practitioner’s confidence and ensuring competence. Coaching is defined as regular, embedded professional development designed to help practitioners and staff use the approach or innovation as intended (fidelity).” Ensure the use of multiple sources of data to provide feedback to practitioners and always include direct observation.

Leadership

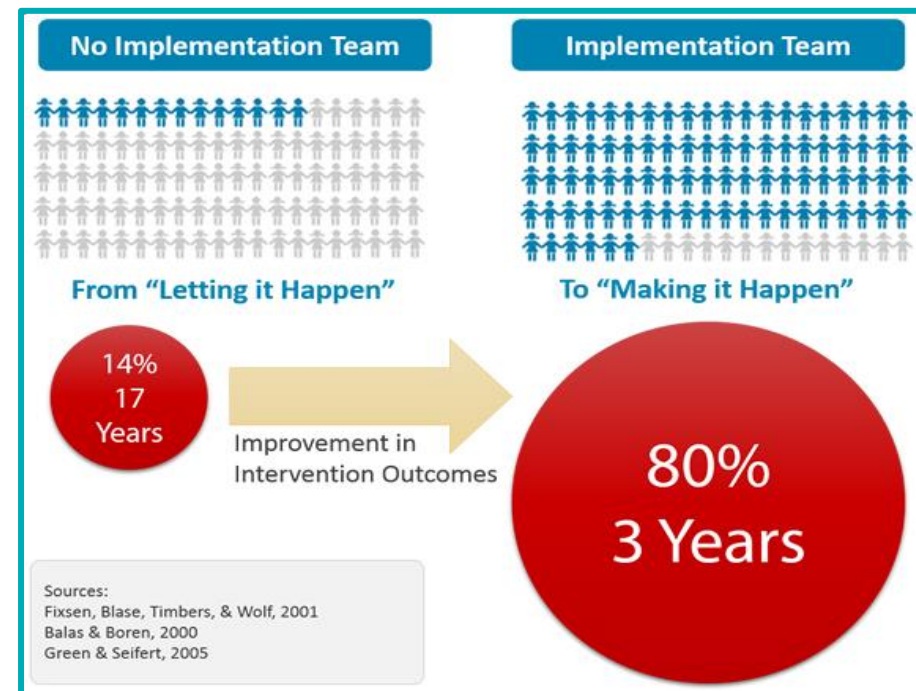
[Leadership](#) involves setting achievable goals, identifying and feeding back success, keeping abreast of implementation steps, roles and progress, accepting barriers/ problems as part of the process, provide opportunities and time to identify/ remove barriers and continue to gather evidence and data.

Training/Professional Learning

[Training/Professional Learning](#) should provide information relating to the theory and underlying values of the approach or programme.

Capacity building through implementation teams

Investing in developing and supporting competence and capacity within [implementation teams](#) can lead to sustained use and significantly improved outcomes in establishments and regional areas (see graphic opposite). Implementation teams can also contribute to increased success and efficiency, with the time required to achieve fidelity reduced from 7 to 3.6 years (Fixsen, Blase, Timbers, & Wolf, 2001).



[Voices from the field: implementation teams](#)

Conditions for success and sustainability - Implementation

Collaborative decision making

Successful implementation is the product of many shared decisions. In all implementation efforts, opportunities exist for critical decision-making that can either increase or decrease the likelihood that implementation will result in equitable outcomes. Ten recommendations from the [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#) include:

- **Engage in deliberate and transparent decision-making.** Implementation decisions should be conscious, reflective, well thought through, and paced in a way that unintended consequences can be assessed. By taking the time to reflect, we can make course corrections for decisions that yield any unexpected results. Decision-making should also be transparently communicated with stakeholders at all levels of implementation.
- **Engage community members in interpreting and using data to support implementation.** The success and sustainability of implementation are related to the alignment with and deep understanding of the needs of a community as defined by the community members themselves.



Community-defined evidence

Equitable implementation starts with how the evidence we seek to implement is developed. Research evidence often demonstrates different levels of effectiveness for different groups of people when replicated or scaled widely, leading to inequitable outcomes. As interventions are developed, it is critical to consider diversity in all its forms - including geographical, racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and access - and to do this through the involvement of local communities. A recommendation for developing community-defined evidence is:

- **Co-design interventions with community members.** This ensures interventions are relevant, desired by communities, and feasible to implement. Community members' experiences and perspectives should be used to develop interventions that are aligned with community needs as they described them.

Make Adaptations

To reduce disparities in outcomes and advance equitable implementation, interventions and services must reach specific groups of people and demonstrate effectiveness in improving outcomes for them. Adaptations through the lens of equity should be made for both interventions and for implementation strategies to ensure the reach and relevance required for equitable implementation. Recommendations for making adaptations include:

- **Address issues of social justice.** Specific groups of people face significant stressors and barriers to that are rooted in systemic inequity.

Conditions for success and sustainability - Implementation

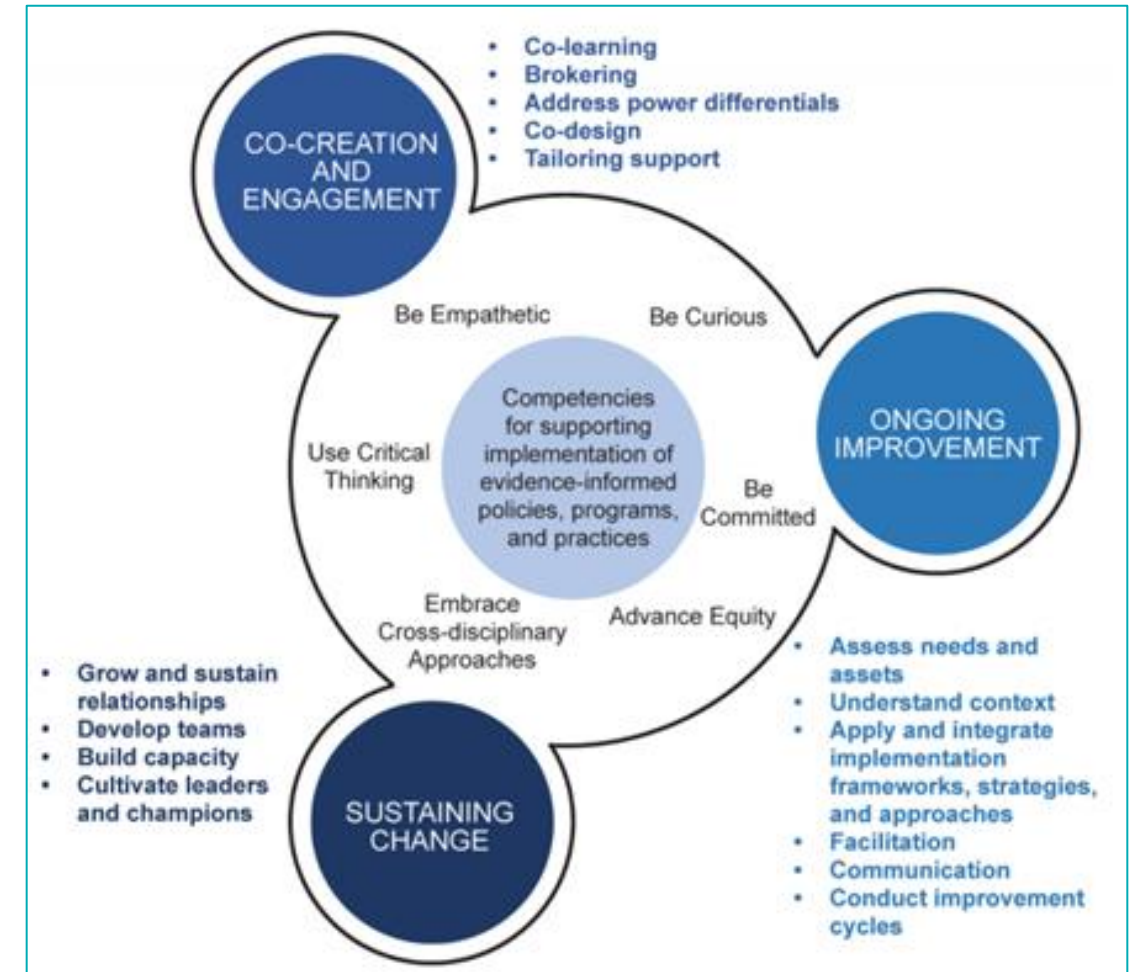
Readiness

Readiness is defined as a developmental point when a person, organisation, or system has the capacity and willingness to engage in a particular activity. Creating '[readiness for change](#)' is a key feature of the [Exploration Stage](#) (framework 2). Encouragement, incentives, or demands to "just do it" typically do not lead to the "action" hoped for by leaders or the management team. What is needed is relevant and detailed information so those who are being asked to change know what is expected, how the process will work, and are "ready" for change. In education "readiness for change" is something that needs to be developed, nurtured, and sustained.

Practice Tip: creating readiness is an ongoing activity and is embedded in each stage of Active Implementation. New leaders, practitioners, community members, new family and youth advocates are always leaving and entering. There is a need to provide them with information, actively request their input, and discuss their concerns as an ongoing task.

Data indicate that about 20% of people and organisations are ready for change at any given time (Prochaska, Prochaska, & Levesque, 2001).

Implementation Support Practitioner Core Competencies Virtual Series



Exemplars - Implementation

- [Using implementation science to support the implementation of interventions in real world contexts](#)
- [Developing a data culture in Stirling \(case study\) Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards \(education.gov.scot\) \(pg 22\).](#)
- [Developing nurturing relationships in Early Years in Dundee \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- [A whole school approach to wellbeing support \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

“Implementation is not an event. It is a mission-oriented process involving multiple decisions, actions, and corrections designed to make full and effective use of effective innovations in education settings” ([National Implementation Research Network](#)).

Useful resources - Implementation

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [Putting Evidence to Work - A School's Guide to Implementation | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)
- [Integrating Improvement and Implementation Sciences to Enhance Educational Outcomes \(unc.edu\)](https://unc.edu)
- [EEF-Active-Ingredients-Summary.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)
- [Professional-Development-Summary_2021-12-07-103959_aibu.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)
- [EEF-Gathering-and-Interpreting-Data-Summary.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)
- [EEF-Implementation-Process-Diagram.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)
- [ISP Practice Guide-v1-11.27.20.pdf \(unc.edu\)](https://unc.edu)
- [IS-Practice-Profile-single-page-printing-v10-November-2020.pdf](https://unc.edu)
- [Increasing Equity in Education](https://unc.edu)
- [Evidence and insights on the poverty-related attainment gap: A presentation, Scottish Attainment Challenge \(education.gov.scot\)](https://education.gov.scot)

Research and articles

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [EEF Implementation Guidance Report 2024.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net)
- [A Review of Implementation Science Theories, Models and Frameworks through an Equity Lens | NIRN \(unc.edu\)](https://unc.edu)



Sustainability

Section overview

What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress?

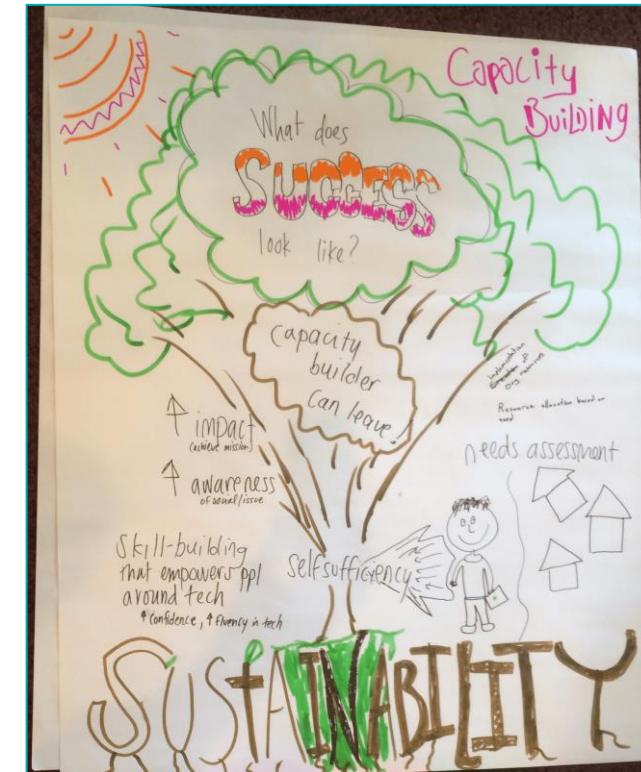
Conditions for success and sustainability

Exemplars

Useful resources

Research and articles

Self-evaluation for equity

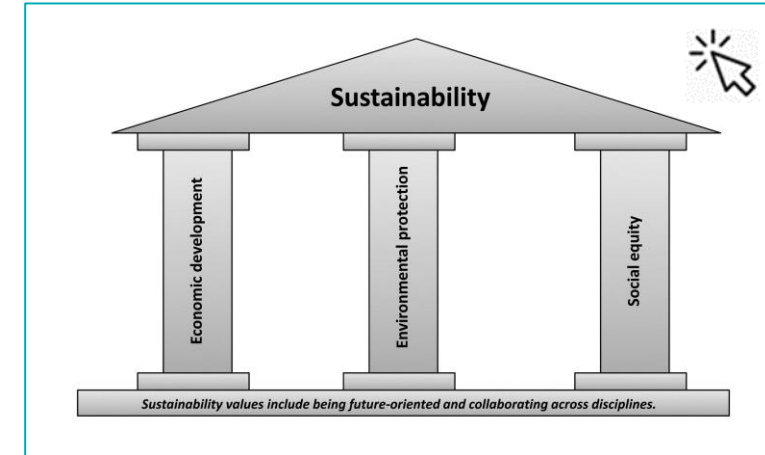


Section overview - Sustainability

Equity is an essential component of sustainability that has been viewed as one of three pillars of sustainability, alongside environment and economy. It is important to highlight the unique role of schools in the context of sustainability, equity and the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Not only are schools' the provider and recipient but are also the funder or commissioner in this regard. Therefore, understanding and connecting with the paradoxes described in this section may provide some reassurance and helpful suggestions for these settings.

"Sometimes sustainability is about equipping other people not to need us anymore: building the capacity of people, communities and other services to sustain things for themselves. Sustainability is really about impact, not organisations. For all these reasons, Wren and Greyhound define sustainability as **the capacity of an organisation, service or system to make a lasting difference.**" For the purposes of the Equity Toolkit, this is the working definition throughout this section. This toolkit and [implementation guide](#) supports practitioners on their journey to managing sustainability challenges.

It is important to acknowledge the global significance of sustainability within the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must closely align with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and encourage economic growth.



What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Sustainability

The [Lasting Difference Toolkit](#) was developed to support the third sector to navigate and provide the 'how to' of organisational sustainability. However, the principles in the toolkit are widely applicable and strongly relate to the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the range of providers and practitioners involved in its delivery. The toolkit was reviewed to take account of COVID-19, but the practice and principles were unchanged and are helpful to consider to support recovery and accelerate progress, particularly when planning for PEF.

The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the importance of collaboration to deliver against national need. The mission approach to the Scottish Attainment Challenge, encourages and supports collaboration, drawing together the necessary expertise, across disciplines, and enabling schools and other partners to unite on defining and addressing specific target areas. The concept of sustainability is about more than survival.

Sustainability should be an [active component](#) at every stage of the process of implementation and ensures continued quality implementation includes plans and activities for:

- Continuing to provide timely and effective training, coaching, and fidelity measurement processes making data-driven decisions for continuous improvement and problem-solving
- Ensuring that policies and procedures continue to support and facilitate full implementation.

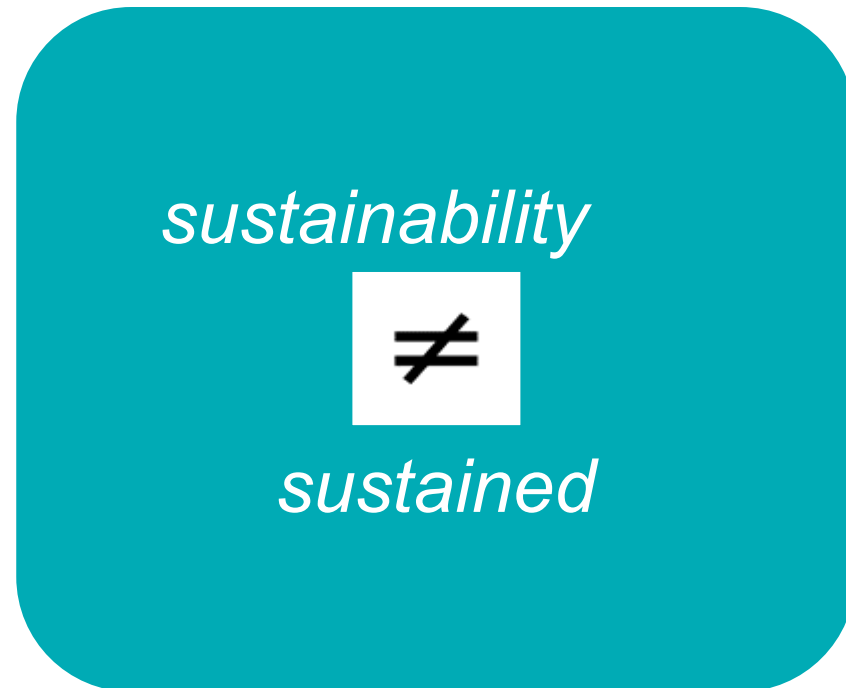


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What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Sustainability

The Change Paradox

The paradox of change is that it is only by changing that we can sustain things. When we think about sustainability, we think it means surviving as we are. But the world is changing around us, so being sustainable means being prepared for change. We need to adapt and evolve in the face of changing needs, situations and the environment. Put simply, if we don't change and adapt, we will get left behind. Therefore, sustainability is not the same as sustained.



Understanding the challenges and key principles of sustainability and counter-acting practice.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGES

WE CAN SUMMARISE THESE CHALLENGES INTO FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY

1. Sustainability does not mean sustained. Things change. Sustainability means not staying the same.
2. It's about more than just the money. Other factors like capacity, development and staff wellbeing are just as important. Experience tells us that money follows good work, not the other way around.
3. Diversifying activity does not necessarily mean reducing risk. Sustainability means being clear on what you do - and don't do - best. Sustainable organisations know when to say 'no'. Saying 'yes' to everything leads to reduced quality, safety and sustainability.
4. Sustainability requires capacity. Organisations, teams and individuals need time and space to think. Without spare capacity, there can be no innovation or development.
5. Sustainability does not mean self-sustaining. On their own, organisations are closed systems which will atrophy without inputs from and exchange with their environments (funding, staff, ideas, support etc.).

The paradoxes, principles, and some of the practices that logically follow are summarised below. More examples of sustainable practices are given under each of the five capabilities in Part Two.

PARADOX / CHALLENGE	PRINCIPLES	PRACTICES
THE CHANGE PARADOX	Sustainability ≠ sustained	Adapt and evolve purposefully
THE YES/NO PARADOX	Sustainability > money	Know what to say 'no' to, when and how
THE OCTOPUS PARADOX	Diversifying activity ≠ reducing risk	Focus on core purpose
THE EFFICIENCY PARADOX	Sustainability requires capacity	Invest in capacity building
THE MYTH OF PERPETUAL MOTION	Sustainability ≠ self-sustaining	Prepare for funding to end
DEEP POCKETS, SHORT ARMS		Build capacity for sustainability

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What can we do to support recovery and accelerate progress? Sustainability

- **Integrate** social equity into sustainability plans through an inclusive process. Leading practice communities invite input from a wide variety of community members and emphasise engaging stakeholders from disadvantaged communities.
- **Collaborate** with third sector organisations, CLD, further education providers and others to achieve common goals. Benefits include improved capacity, increased economies of scale and increased sharing knowledge in community development efforts.
- Set [equity goals](#) that specifically address the needs of children and young people most at risk of disadvantage. This strategy ensures that ramifications of specific choices can be thoughtfully considered ahead of developing interventions and services and their implementation.
- Use data and establish performance measures to track progress towards social equity objectives. Leading practice communities share progress to provide evidence as to whether social equity objectives are being achieved. This strategy ensures transparency and accountability.
- Advancing social equity requires innovation and leadership.

"Sometimes sustainability is about equipping other people not to need us anymore: building the capacity of people, communities and other services to sustain things for themselves."

Wren and Greyhound, The Lasting Difference Toolkit, version 5

Conditions for success and sustainability

Sustainability

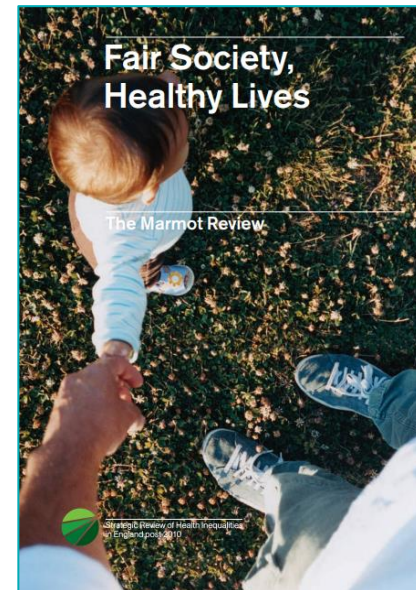
The provision of multi-year funding is helpful for sustainability.

Evidence on the most important factors influencing educational attainment suggests that it is families, rather than schools, that have the most influence. Closer links between schools, the family, and the local community are needed.'

[Marmot Review, 2010](#)

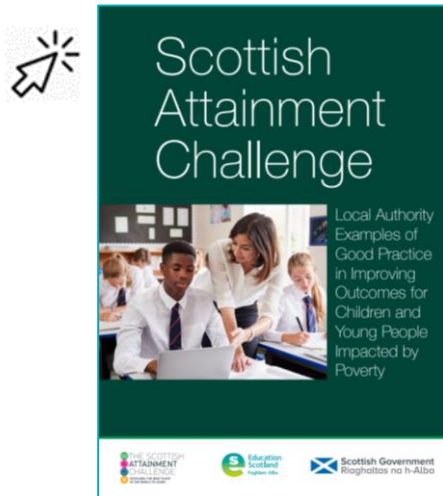
To work collectively on the refreshed Mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge practitioners should catalyse cross-sector and interdisciplinary working to maximise resources, expertise and additional funding as leverage to meet the scale of the challenges.

"Some of the greatest innovations of our time have come from the need to solve problems. The internet was initially designed to solve the problem of satellites communicating GPS to determine the location of military equipment." Mazzucato, M. (2018) ([Missions: Mission-Oriented Research & Innovation in the European Union. European Commission](#)).



Exemplars - Sustainability

- St Ninian's Primary School were keen to maximise their PEF spend to create a sustainable support system for pupils: [Pupil Equity funding used to empower support staff to close the poverty related attainment gap in Inverclyde \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- St Ninian's High School views raising attainment as a whole school approach embedded within existing structures and supported by robust systems and processes: [Embedding the Pupil Equity Fund within whole school inclusive approaches, St Ninians High School \(education.gov.scot\)](#)



This document draws together examples of the range of work taking place in local authorities, specifically using Strategic Equity and Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding, to tackle the impacts of poverty on children and young people's attainment



[Strategic Equity and Care Experienced Children and Young People 2026 Report, Scottish Government \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Useful resources - Sustainability

The resources linked below provide a range of practical strategies, ideas and links which you may find useful.

- [The Lasting Difference Toolkit](#) by Wren and Greyhound provides practical tools to address sustainability
- [Finding Sustainability within Active Implementation Frameworks \(Youtube\)](#)
- [Voices from the Field Video Series \(Sustainability\) – AI Hub \(unc.edu\)](#)
- [Evidence and insights on the poverty-related attainment gap: A presentation, Scottish Attainment Challenge \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Research and articles - Sustainability

The following articles and research relating to this section are available.

- [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](#)



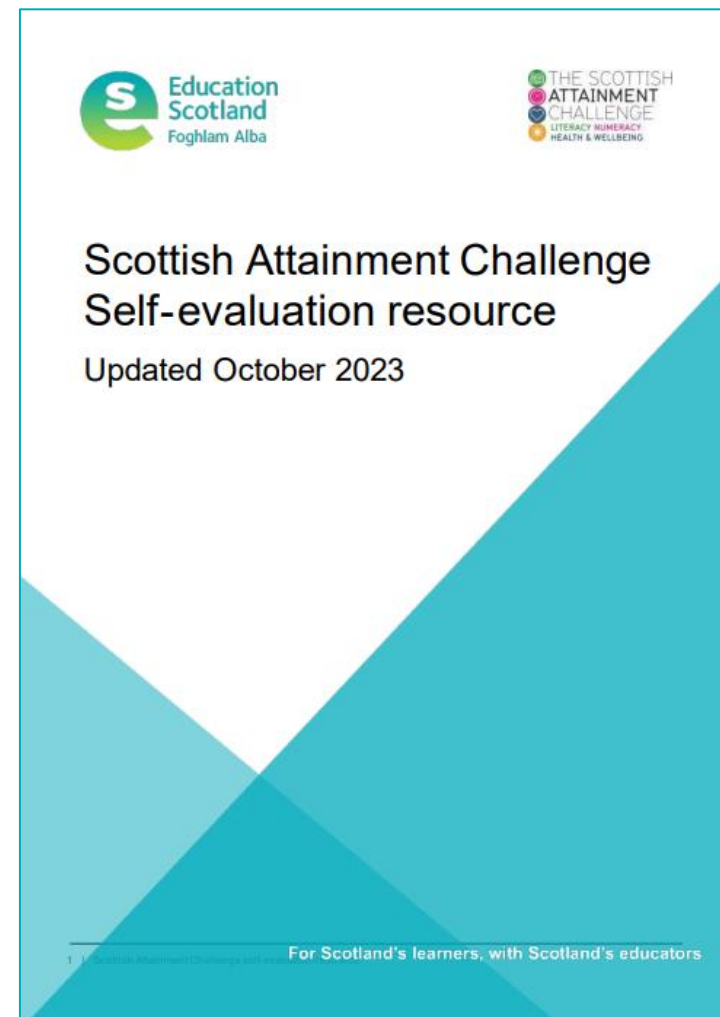
Self-evaluation for equity

The purpose of the [Scottish Attainment Challenge Self-evaluation resource](#) is to support the achievement of equity in Scottish education. It is designed to assist early years settings, schools, local authorities, regional improvement collaboratives and local and national partners in bringing about further improvement using Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. It has been used widely by schools and local authorities to support their work in relation to achieving equity.

It provides features of highly effective practice and challenge questions grouped under the themes related to the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the National Improvement Framework: leadership, learning and teaching and families and communities. The themes include a mixture of the primary levers for change, interventions for equity and policy priorities.

This resource supports the education system to take a closer look at the most effective approaches to achieving equity and help establishments and the wider system, reflect on the impact of poverty on learners and learning. The following questions remain at the heart of self-evaluation:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?



Frequently Asked Questions

Got a question? We're here to answer! If you don't see your question answered here, please [contact us](#).

Questions	Answers
What is Scotland's Equity Toolkit?	Scotland's Equity Toolkit: supporting recovery and accelerating progress is a live resource, which is being shaped by practitioners, for practitioners to support the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge . It is an accessible resource, which provides information on what practitioners can do and the conditions required for success and sustainability by ensuring equity throughout the learner journey. The toolkit provides information that can be used and adapted in a range of settings to ensure every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap, whilst raising attainment for all.
Who is the information in Scotland's Equity Toolkit for?	The information in the toolkit can be used and adapted across sectors, including primary and secondary schools, early learning and childcare, CLD and the Third Sector. The toolkit's audience is reflective of the diverse roles involved in improving outcomes for children and young people most impacted by poverty. This includes, but is not limited to: • Practitioners (including teachers, Pupil Support Assistants, CLD and third sector) • Senior Leadership Teams (including headteachers, deputy headteachers, team leaders and managers) • Local authority staff (including Quality Improvement Officers, Service Leaders and Education Officers).
What can I use the information in Scotland's Equity Toolkit for?	The information in the toolkit can be used to support a range of activities. For example, it may be useful for: • Supporting a headteacher to engage with their staff on preparing their School Improvement Plan. • A range of practitioners to consider equity within their approach to designing and delivering Professional Learning. • A range of practitioners involved in the planning and delivery of PEF interventions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions	Answers
Do I have to read and research the whole resource?	No. Scotland's Equity Toolkit was not designed to be read from cover to cover. The resource has been designed for users to access different parts of the resource for varying needs at different times. The resource has been grouped into thematic sections to reduce time spent searching for material. It is likely users will dip in and out of the resource, as required, as a 'one-stop resource' for the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The resource is designed to have all the functionality of a website, within a resource. Please see the short video located on page 2 and within the Thinglink for more information on how to use.
What evidence was used to inform the development of this resource?	Evidence underpinning the rationale, purpose and function of the resource was shaped by sources, including: - Discovery research informing how Education Scotland delivers its digital strategy and how services and resources are designed and delivered - Professor Ken Muir's report Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Vision for Scottish Education (pages 47-50, 56-58, 80, 82, 86, 87) - Verbal feedback from a range of stakeholders, including practitioners, headteachers, local authority officers and children and young people.
How do I locate specific sections within Scotland's Equity Toolkit?	Please use the Thinglink to locate and access sections within the toolkit and an overview of content. There is also a short video illustrating how to use Scotland's Equity Toolkit within the Thinglink. Content can also be located from the main menu on the home page on page 3. From there, please use the thematic tiles and navigation buttons located at the top of each page. The navigation buttons can be used to navigate sections and pages, including a Home button to return you to the main menu.
Is there a search function within the resource?	Yes. There is a search icon within the resource that can be used to locate specific words, which helps to identify content. This will bring up all references to the word you are looking for, where you can scroll for specific purposes. You can also use bookmarking within the resource. Bookmarking allows easy navigation through pages by simply clicking the bookmark links on the left-hand side of the page instead of scrolling.

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions	Answers
How have children and young people been involved and consulted with in designing and developing Scotland's Equity Toolkit?	Children and young people are involved in shaping the content for Scotland's Equity Toolkit. Children and young people participate in focus groups with a set of questions, co-created by them. Their views are reflected in the content.
When I navigate to an external link from Scotland's Equity Toolkit, it does not return me to where I left off – it takes me back to the beginning of the resource. Why does this happen?	This is an inconsistent issue which appears to affect certain browsers. In the event this happens, you can use the shortcut keys to toggle back and forth between two locations by pressing the alt button and the left or right arrow keys.
How have protected characteristics and examples of intersectionality with economic disadvantage, been referenced in the resource?	Please see the Introduction, Learning, Teaching, Curriculum and Assessment and Inclusion sections for further information on protected characteristics and intersectionality with economic disadvantage.
How do I know what information is contained within each section?	Please see the Thinglink to get an overview of content within each section.
Could the resource be changed to a website?	Not at present. Education Scotland will continue to review data analytics, content and feedback to inform how user-centric approaches are accessed and embedded across digital resources.
How will the content on assessment change in light of the Hayward Review?	In the event of changes to assessment, as a result of recommendations endorsed from the report "It's Our Future - Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment," content within the toolkit will be updated.
How will this resource remain current and not quickly date?	The resource will be reviewed regularly and updated where necessary to ensure content is reflective of the Scottish educational landscape.

Frequently Asked Questions

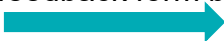
Questions	Answers
Why is content or links repeated in the same or different sections?	Depending on the nature of why the user may be accessing the resource, content has been repeated for consistency and coherence. For example, if a user were accessing the resource for information on PEF, the information may be contained within the “PEF: inwards, outwards, forwards” document. Similarly, if the user were accessing the resource for family learning, examples may also be referenced in the same “PEF: inwards outwards forwards” document. This could be the same for other resources.
How has Scotland’s Equity Toolkit been framed within the current policy landscape in Scotland and the overarching vision for recovery?	Please see the Introduction section for further information on how the toolkit has been framed within the current policy landscape in Scotland.
Is there a separate approach to embed equity in materials provided by Education Scotland?	No. There is not a separate approach to equity across Education Scotland’s resources. The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model – Our Theory of Change illustrates, at a high level, the activities that will lead to the short, medium and long term outcomes designed to achieve the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Scotland’s Equity Toolkit provides information that directly informs practice to support achieving those short, medium and long-term outcomes.
A link I’ve tried to access is broken. How can I make Education Scotland aware of this?	Please contact us to make us aware of any broken links or content that has moved, also located in the Feedback and FAQ section on pages 194 and 198.
How can I provide feedback or suggestions about Scotland’s Equity Toolkit?	Please share ideas and feedback through this MS Form , also located in the Feedback and FAQ section on page 198.

Feedback

To ensure Scotland's Equity Toolkit remains a current and up to date resource that is responsive to the needs of Scotland's learners, it is vital to have an ongoing feedback loop with the system of education.

Please use the [MS Form](#) to share your feedback about what is working well in the toolkit and any suggested improvements.

Please also share ideas or information about interesting practice or approaches.

You can also access the feedback form by scanning the QR code opposite on a mobile device or tablet 

Contact us

Whilst we endeavour to ensure links in the toolkit are active and accessible, content can move location or be removed from web pages. If you come across a link that is inaccessible, please [contact us](#) to make us aware.



Acknowledgements

It is important to acknowledge and give thanks to the many colleagues and individuals who contributed to the development of Scotland's Equity Toolkit.

In particular, we would like to thank respondents to the consultation for their helpful feedback, the children and young people for sharing their views and to the practitioners who shaped the information that is included in the resource.

A special mention is given to the four Career Ready students who researched and developed content on Participatory Budgeting during their internship at Education Scotland. We also extend our gratitude to young leaders from The Place in Alness and Inspire Highland for supporting the focus groups by co-constructing questions and their active involvement in the process. We are grateful for the active participation of children and young people from schools in Angus, Aberdeen City, Highland Council and West Dunbartonshire in the equity focus groups.

Thanks also to colleagues in Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.

