

# Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge

**National Summary Report**  
**September – November 2022**

**For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators**

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# Section 1

## 1.1 Introduction

As part of the cycle for reporting on the implementation of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), attainment advisors produce reports triannually. This summary report is an overview of the analysis of the progress of all 32 local authorities for the period September to November 2022.

The key theme for this reporting period was the Scottish Attainment Challenge refresh and the progress of local authorities in improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

## 1.2 Progress towards next steps for this period

The Recovery and Progress Reports on 2021-22 for each local authority identified the next steps for the implementation of the SAC refresh. When summarised in the [Scottish Attainment Challenge: Recovery and Progress Report on 2021-22](#), key themes for next steps emerged as:

- Attainment Scotland Fund
- Stretch aims
- Data

There is evidence that the majority of local authorities have made progress towards their next steps.

Although every local authority has its own context and improvement journey, there are several areas of commonality. Key themes emerging reflect the importance placed on the [SAC Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress](#) (the Framework) and include:

- Stretch aims
- Strategic Equity Fund
- Pupil Equity Fund
- Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund

There is strong evidence that these key themes are unified by the following features:

- Tracking and monitoring
- Data
- Professional learning
- Attainment, equity and the poverty-related gap
- Quality assurance

In many local authorities the range of SAC funding has been used successfully to fill posts such as equity leads, quality improvement roles, Care Experienced Children and Young People coordinators, virtual headteachers, 'pathways advocate' teachers and family link workers.

For some, for a variety of reasons, recruiting to posts has been challenging. There is evidence that local authorities and schools are addressing this by changing or adapting plans. This ensures that an appropriate, alternative intervention or approach is put in place and an underspend is avoided.

## Stretch Aims

All local authorities submitted their stretch aims to the Scottish Government in September 2022. For some, the SAC national events were cited as providing opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities. Stakeholder consultation was evident in the process of setting the stretch aims.

Stretch aims
<i>Stakeholder consultation and review and analysis of attainment resulted in the identification of ambitious, achievable stretch aims.</i>
<i>The authority made significant progress in the submission of stretch aims, following widespread consultation across schools. Stretch aims were based on robust analysis of most recent and historical data.</i>
<i>The group consulted effectively with a range of stakeholders to consider challenges and opportunities afforded by the setting of stretch aims. Stakeholders included headteachers, education and family managers, senior leaders, the virtual school lead and Skills Development Scotland.</i>
<i>A substantial amount of work, planning and consultation took place to set the local stretch aims.</i>
<i>Self-evaluation activity and stakeholder engagement remains ongoing in relation to SAC and setting stretch aims. At learner level, this has included senior phase captains engaging in dialogue around the national discussion and pupil representatives attending education cabinet meetings to give their views on educational priorities.</i>
<i>There were robust discussions between Education Scotland and schools and learning and education teams regarding the appropriateness of some data used as baselines and stretch aims ambition. The local authority consulted with peers from other local authorities and were comfortable the stretch aims submitted were achievable but ambitious.</i>
<i>Consultation with all partners was very much part of the stretch aims process.</i>

## Strategic Equity Fund

For those local authorities who identified the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) within their next steps, the majority evidence that a plan has been developed. In some instances, the fund is being used to establish new posts. Where local authorities are making the transition from Challenge or Schools Programme funding, there is some evidence of continued support for existing projects. There are indications of learners being involved in decision-making, but not universally

### Strategic Equity Fund

*The local authority is actively progressing its SEF plan, including successfully recruiting a SAC officer.*

*The appointment of the quality improvement officer, funded by the Strategic Equity Fund, will serve to support schools with the interrogation and analysis of data.*

*The local authority is making progress with strengthening pupils' voice. Plans are in the early stages to engage the 'Pupil Group' and 'Barnardo's Advisory Group of Young People' to support decision making of the Strategic Equity Fund beyond this academic year of the challenge.*

*The local authority has worked with senior leaders and other stakeholders to develop a four-year strategic plan for the Strategic Equity Fund*

*Following consultation central staff remits were adapted to include closer alignment to the developing Strategic Equity Fund priorities.*

*Strategic Equity Funding has been allocated to support the continuing focus on improving the quality and consistency of learning and teaching to narrow the gap.*

### Pupil Equity Fund

Significant progress has been made where local authorities had identified Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) as a next step. The progress is wide-ranging, however in line with the Framework, there is stronger evidence of an increased use of PEF planning, whether incorporated into school improvement plans or as standalone documents. There is also greater evidence of authority-led quality assurance in evaluating the impact of the funding. In a few instances, processes for tracking and monitoring of PEF underspend were cited.

Overall, local authorities appear to be in a better position to monitor and evaluate the impact of the PEF and evidenced-based approaches. This is reflected in the wide-ranging use of data to inform where targeted interventions should be made at both school and authority level. This is ensuring a more robust approach by local authorities in identifying and closing poverty-related gaps.

The majority of local authorities are supporting schools and practitioners by providing a variety of professional learning opportunities. Evidence shows that these have been created as the result of self-evaluation processes. At the very least, there is an increase of professional dialogue, support and advice on the use of PEF. In some, there are visits made by local authority officers to ensure the monies are being targeted appropriately. In others, there are series of events to improve the skills and knowledge in managing the funding.

### Pupil Equity Fund

*Professional dialogue takes place regarding the use of Pupil Equity Fund and measures identified within school improvement plans.*

*The SAC lead continues to have regular engagement with the attainment advisor who provides advice and guidance, builds capacity of staff and contributes to robust evaluation and impact of the Pupil Equity Fund.*

<i>The attainment advisor worked closely with the local authority to review schools' PEF plans. Good practice was highlighted and has been shared with headteachers during quality assurance visits and attainment advisor visits to establishments.</i>
<i>Schools were asked to complete self-evaluations at the beginning and the end of the year about their use of data. These, as well as primary school improvement and Pupil Equity Fund plans, showed an increased confidence and more effective use of data in targeting resources towards improvement</i>
<i>32 schools across the authority have been involved in joint visits from the quality improvement officer and attainment advisor. These visits have provided support and challenge to schools around their current PEF spend, previous and expected impact and how well their planning supports targeting and quality assurance.</i>
<i>The quality improvement officer and attainment advisor will continue to focus on the use of the Pupil Equity Fund. This will support the work on closing the poverty-related attainment gap throughout this academic year. An action plan has been created based on analysis from ongoing quality assurance processes. Following this, universal, additional and targeted support are being offered to school leaders and practitioners across the local authority.</i>
<i>The local authority has made good progress with increasing how they monitor PEF plans and provide challenge and support for headteachers. A new team of senior, and collaborative lead officers are now reviewing and quality assuring PEF plans. These officers check the data included in the PEF plan aligns with the school improvement plan. Feedback, support and guidance will be provided to headteachers.</i>
<i>The new PEF governance model has been successfully implemented. A new planning template has been issued to support headteachers to provide a strategic approach on maximising funding. Expectations have also been communicated to headteachers on the importance of refining outcomes and measures. Professional learning sessions have been delivered to each of the nine cluster headteachers on maximising the impact of this funding and articulating this more clearly in their PEF plans.</i>

## Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund

There is some evidence that local authorities have made progress and improved outcomes for children and young people with care experience.

In the best examples, there is strong evidence that collaborative working across agencies is having a positive impact on children and young people who are care experienced.

For some, plans have been developed that include wider achievement, for example, The Prince's Trust and Motivation Commitment and Resilience Pathways. In a few local authorities closer monitoring of attendance is informing targeted interventions. This is having a positive impact for children and young people with care experience.

<b>Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund</b>
<i>Pathways advocate teachers are in the process of being appointed for each school to support care experienced young people.</i>
<i>Measures in place to track progress of these evidence-based projects, indicate positive outcomes for learners.</i>

*Robust plans are in place for the virtual headteacher with clear outcomes and measures. Plans are regularly tracked and governance meetings are attended by social work and education to facilitate scrutiny of progress. The local authority is aware of the need to apply the same rigour to all spending from this fund.*

*Social work, health and education colleagues regularly attend networking meetings. Multi-agency collaboration is taking place to discuss areas such as child protection, care experience and The Promise. The local authority is embedding Dyadic Developmental Practice to support the parenting of children and young people. Colleagues from health, social work and education all attend multi-agency training. Health and wellbeing liaison officers within the Care Experience team continue to work with children, young people and their families across the authority to build relationships, improve self-esteem and confidence whilst also supporting school attendance.*

*A significant amount of progress has been made regarding work in support of the authority's care experienced children and young people. A new team is in place to support this group of learners and schools as well as driving forward developments. New guidance and procedures have been created to ensure the authority fulfil its corporate parent duties and ensure the best possible start for children and young people with care experience. A self-evaluation toolkit was developed and plans are in place to implement it across schools this session. This should lead to building capacity, working with schools to ensure that they have the skills and confidence to make early identification as well as fully include and support this group of learners.*

*Close monitoring of attendance continues to impact positively on the attendance of young people who are care experienced, particularly those who are in secondary.*

*The use of the CECYP Fund and wider progress in improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people will continue to be monitored in line with the local authority's agreed multi-agency governance arrangements.*

*CECYP funding is also being used to fund long-term projects such as The Prince's Trust and Motivation Commitment and Resilience Pathways. Measures in place to track progress of these evidence-based projects indicate positive outcomes for learners.*

*The evaluation of work undertaken in 2021-22 as part of the CECYP Fund, indicates a positive impact on attendance, engagement, school experience, early intervention and addressing factors which otherwise may have led to children and young people becoming looked after away from home.*

## Section 2

Theme: Implementation of the Scottish Attainment Challenge refresh

### 2.1 Governance and management

This section provides an up-to-date overview of governance and management arrangements of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) across all local authorities. Almost all local authorities demonstrate further refinement in governance and management processes since the refresh of the SAC. During this reporting period, four key common themes were evident and are outlined below.

#### Reporting to Elected Members

Evidence from the majority of local authorities suggests that reporting to Elected Members continues to be a key priority within governance processes. Regularity of reporting varies across local authorities. However, where detailed, this happens at least annually. Reports provide opportunities to share planning, information on financial spend, data and evidence of impact. In a few examples, Elected Members are involved in attainment visits or discussions with schools. As a result, there are indications that this provides effective scrutiny of both plans and of the impact of the SAC.

#### Reporting to Elected Members

*Transparency is evident through the progress and impact that is regularly shared with Elected Members, chief officers, and the children's services board. Significant work has been undertaken to present data in an accessible and clear format to allow for effective scrutiny to take place.*

*Elected Members and stakeholders are kept informed of progress at two area committees per year through secondary attainment and primary school performance reports. The policy lead for education receives monthly updates and uses their quarterly reports to update other Elected Members. Elected Members are invited to each secondary school in November for a detailed results analysis which includes a focus on the poverty-related attainment gap.*

*The local authority is required to report regularly and routinely to Elected Members about their planning and progress in relation to all Attainment Scotland Fund streams. This provides a further layer of scrutiny and accountability around local authority school plans and progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap.*

*Elected Member engagement continues to be an important aspect of the education service's approach to the Scottish Attainment Challenge governance. Elected Members are kept well informed through an annual update on Strategic Equity Fund and Pupil Equity Fund approaches and impact through a cabinet paper.*

*The head of education reports to the Elected Members, with progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, with attainment committee reports presented to the education, sport, and children's services committee.*

*Engagement with Elected Members continues to be an important aspect of the education service's approach to the SAC governance. They are kept well informed through an annual update on SEF and PEF approaches and impact.*



## Collaboration

Partnership working and collaboration are key themes within the SAC Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress. Positively, approaches to collaboration, partnership working and engaging with stakeholders are priorities in a majority of local authorities. In the best examples, plans are co-constructed with a wide range of partners. There is increasing evidence of multi-agency groups working together to implement plans, with some early indications of improved outcomes for children and young people. Almost all examples mention consultation with headteachers. There are increasing indications that local authorities are further developing a shared understanding of the SAC and the refreshed mission.

### Collaboration and partnership working

*The lead officer worked in partnership with stakeholders, headteachers and the attainment advisor to re-examine the barriers and supports needed to close the poverty-related attainment gap. This resulted in the identification of authority stretch aims, core plus aims and sub-measures that are relevant, ambitious and achievable. Collaboration with other local authorities through networking events continues to further strengthen local authority planning.*

*The local authority is taking a whole-systems approach to the refreshed mission to encourage collaboration across learning communities.*

*The local authority has clear decision-making structures that involve all stakeholders. There are strong links with the Parent Council Chairs group who was consulted on both the Strategic Equity Fund plan and stretch aims. The Scottish Attainment Challenge lead officer is a key member of the local Poverty Alliance Group and was therefore able to easily consult with them as part of the process.*

*Quality partnerships continue to be an integral part of the authority's attainment challenge. Barnardo's, speech and language, libraries, education psychology and Community Learning and Development have agreed and are implementing planning that aligns with the SAC Logic Model aims. All partners review and report on the progress of plans three times a year. Approaches are also reviewed to support sustainability.*

*There is strong evidence of increased partnership working to deliver improvements for learners, for example, the educational psychology team has supported the delivery of nurture training. The inclusion team, responsible for the implementation of the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund, has more involvement in the delivery of the new coordinated SEF plan.*

*There is strong evidence of effective partnership working delivering improvements for learners through the local authority's empowering clusters model. For example, educational psychology supporting schools to embed nurturing approaches through a nurture self-evaluation toolkit and delivery of professional learning.*

## Quality Assurance Processes

Overall, local authorities continue to have a focus on a variety of quality assurance processes. In the majority, support and challenge is offered to schools by local authority officers. This happens in a range of ways including school attainment visits, collaborative and thematic reviews and dialogue with headteachers. These processes are supported by data analysis, both at school and at local authority level. Additionally,

there is evidence of data being used to monitor progress and impact of approaches used to deliver the SAC.

Central analysis of school improvement plans and Pupil Equity Fund plans is a common approach. This is used to ensure a focus on equity. There are some indications that, this analysis, along with attainment data, is used to identify schools where there may be a need for targeted support. Approaches continue to be refined to align with the refreshed mission of the SAC.

#### Quality assurance processes

*Quality assurance processes which were established last year have been further enhanced. All quality improvement officers provide regular support and challenge around equity leading to more collective responsibility for closing poverty-related attainment gaps.*

*The 'quartile schools' approach has strengthened quality assurance processes while empowering schools to have a greater focus on equity. This work is being supported by the newly appointed quality improvement officer who is at the early stages of planning and implementing a school review programme in collaboration with headteachers.*

*The authority updated and further developed frameworks to support Standards and Quality reporting and school improvement planning. This has ensured consistency and improved standards of planning and reporting across schools. Furthermore, it has supported schools to analyse the effectiveness of spend and report on the impact of targeted interventions. Pupil Equity Funding is a standing item on all attainment visits, providing an opportunity for link quality improvement officers and attainment advisor to support and challenge schools.*

*The process of school improvement visits has been reviewed by the central quality improvement team. This included quality assurance of reports and key messages. Evaluation of the process has identified improvements to be made which will ensure increased consistency and coherence in quality assurance. These comprise identifying a set of agreed questions for professional dialogue, a generic format for feedback to schools and ensuring that learner focus groups are representative of the whole school community and demographic. PEF and the impact of school level interventions is included, encouraging regular professional dialogue focused on equity.*

#### Groups, Forums and Workstreams

To a lesser extent, local authorities have created specific groups, forums or workstreams to support governance and management processes. The working arrangements and remits of these vary widely. Some groups are at strategic level and have responsibility for quality assurance and scrutiny of plans. Strategic groups are also described as providing a layer of governance and accountability for the financial aspects of the Attainment Scotland Fund. Additionally, there are examples of multi-agency groups planning, co-ordinating and reviewing improvement activity at a strategic level.

In other local authorities, workstreams have been set up specifically to implement key aspects of work in relation to equity, the SEF and stretch aims. These workstreams generally then report to a strategic group within the local authority.

### Groups, forums and workstreams

*The local authority is in the process of setting up a Scottish Attainment Challenge governance group. The purpose of this group will be to monitor Strategic Equity Fund spend. The impact of interventions/ approaches will also be monitored and measured with effective practice being shared across the local authority. The group will initially include a range of post holders representing early years, primary, secondary and support services, for example, educational psychology. This will ensure a collaborative partnership approach to closing the poverty-related attainment gap and facilitating the communication of best practice.*

*A strategic equity oversight group will be created to support the sustainability of the strategy. Key members of the local authority team, headteachers, the data principal officer and the attainment advisor will take an active role in the creation of the raising attainment strategy. Some identified members of this group will also form the strategic equity oversight group.*

*It has been agreed that the oversight and monitoring of progress against the SAC stretch aims will be managed through several dedicated workstreams. These workstreams will report back to the raising attainment board in January and May 2023.*

*Governance arrangements are to be further enhanced by the creation of a SEF oversight board, with representation of a wide range of partners including education, 'Thriving Communities', educational psychological services and social services. This group will ensure that governance requirements are undertaken in line with the Framework. Education Scotland has been invited to be part of this board to provide further challenge, advice and support. This board will build on existing partnerships which support the implementation of the SAC.*

In addition to these four main themes, there are several other commonalities worth noting. These include:

- Approaches to analysis of data, data literacy training and use of tracking and monitoring systems
- Developing a multi-year strategic plan or stretch aims
- Strategies and frameworks that support raising attainment and planning for equity

## 2.2 Strategic Equity Fund

There is strong evidence that local authorities have carefully considered how to make best use of the Strategic Equity Funding. In the best examples this has involved self-evaluation, including reviewing existing work, consultation with stakeholders and reflecting on prior learning to develop robust plans.

### Planning processes

*In order to effectively manage the transition from Challenge Authority funding to Strategic Equity Funding the local authority reviewed its previous SAC plan resulting in the removal, refocusing or retention of the existing resources. This SEF plan is much more focused on supporting recovery and close the poverty-related attainment gap.*

*The current SEF plan is based on prior learning from thematic reviews, Schools Programme schools and learning from other local authorities.*

*Following extensive consultation with headteachers and stakeholders a SEF plan was put in place. Authority staff are engaging with requirements of the SAC Framework and are working well with the attainment advisor, identifying interventions to support the meeting of stretch aims.*

*Following self-evaluation and consultation with a range of stakeholders including headteachers and practitioners, the authority has carefully planned to utilise their reduced funding allocation as they transition from challenge authority status.*

There is some evidence that, for at least a small number of local authorities, SEF planning forms part of wider strategic plans outlining how intersecting policy areas aim to tackle inequity and improve the life chances of those impacted by poverty.

### **Wider strategic plans**

*The 'Framework for Equity' sets out the vision of investing shared resources to target early intervention and prevention for children and young people being central to tackling inequality and improving life chances.*

*The local authority developed its SEF plan to increase resource and build capacity to support the ambitions of its five-year strategic plan. The plan outlines longer term ambitions across intersecting policy areas including the National Improvement Framework, The Promise and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

*The embedding of SEF within the local authority's overall strategic approaches to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families should help to ensure the sustainability of the most effective interventions as funding decreases over the next few years.*

The SEF is funding a variety of work to deliver a range of positive outcomes including reducing health inequality, increasing attendance, improving attainment and increasing positive destinations. A few local authorities are creating a fund to which schools can apply to take forward equity-related projects.

### **Funded initiatives**

*Each school cluster has access to at least one full time youth worker. Following an early intervention rationale and a multiagency approach, school leaders can make a referral for a child or young person. This system ensures a fair and equitable approach across the partnership, making sure those most in need take priority. Targeted referrals are made because of identifying barriers to learning such as poor attendance, exclusion and lack of engagement and participation.*

*Some SEF funding will be used to build on the speech, language and communication project successfully implemented in nurseries as part of the SAC by implementing a test of change in four primary schools. This multi-disciplinary project aims to build capacity for staff working to develop children's speech, language and communication skills in a primary one context, through collaborative work with specialist speech and language therapists.*

*Some of the SEF funding will go towards supporting family work and improvement methodology. Early planning discussions indicate professional learning to support closing the poverty-related attainment gap in literacy, numeracy and health and*

*wellbeing will be included as will mentoring for senior phase pupils to support the achievement of stretch aims.*

*The local authority will use the SEF funding to introduce SEF intervention grants. Schools will bid for funding via the SEF intervention grant to deliver school-designed projects linked to delivery of National Improvement Framework measures and the local authority's stretch aims.*

Clear links between SEF planning and stretch aims are emerging. Plans outline that improving outcomes in literacy, numeracy, attendance and positive destinations are driving many of the initiatives.

### **Links with stretch aims**

*Family learning officers are being asked to work with their schools to support families who have been identified as requiring support to increase the attendance of their child(ren). Plans for improving attendance also include the development of a series of attendance and engagement workshops for schools to be delivered throughout the session as well as working closely with the educational psychology service. This will provide schools and families with a variety of support to increase attendance.*

*Funding is being used to provide cover for practitioners to develop an equitable literacy self-evaluation resource for schools. Funding has also been allocated for the attendance workstream. This will mirror the successful model developed by the virtual headteacher team which improved the attendance of children who are care experienced in the authority. The funding will pilot a similar approach but for children who are impacted by poverty.*

*SEF during 2023-26 will focus intensively on literacy through establishing an intervention team. Targeted schools, comprising mainly of those with the highest number of learners within quintile one, will be supported to evaluate planning, learning, teaching and assessment approaches to literacy. This will inform a co-created, bespoke plan focused on raising attainment in literacy for all and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.*

*In each of the secondary schools, SEF will be used to enhance an existing principal teacher post to provide leadership of approaches to equity and achieving the authority stretch aims.*

*Through the empowering clusters model, headteachers will deploy SEF cluster attainment teachers to work directly with children and young people most impacted by poverty in literacy and numeracy interventions. The pathways programme will continue to support young people most at risk of disengaging from learning into positive post-school destinations.*

There is strong evidence that SEF has provided the opportunity for local authorities to enhance current staffing with roles that are specifically focused on reducing poverty-related gaps. Many of these roles enhance existing central teams in order to support schools. For example, by providing robust data and professional learning to increase data literacy as well as support and challenge to develop more effective leadership. Specialist staff have also been appointed to support targeted interventions.

## Staffing

*This session the authority is using the SEF to employ additional staffing. Four posts have been created with a view to providing increased support, challenge and guidance to headteachers on the deployment and management of PEF.*

*Some funding will be used to recruit a Strategic Equity Funding lead officer to work with a range of stakeholders to improve systems and processes for tracking, monitoring and data analysis*

*The local authority has used funding to strengthen its data team ensuring that high quality analysis takes place. It has also appointed an experienced, recently retired, primary head teacher to mentor and support newly appointed leaders to ensure the development of high-quality leadership in all schools.*

*SEF will fund a quality improvement officer post.*

*Specific key responsibilities of the post will include:*

- tracking and monitoring attainment and achievement to ensure high quality learning and teaching consistently across all schools*
- collating, analysing and using a range of performance information about schools to challenge and support improvement and sharing practice*
- working alongside the Care Experienced Child and Young People's coordinator to track, monitor and support children and young people with care experience*
- supporting and monitoring the key processes associated with school development planning in schools*
- collaborating with the SAC lead and the AA to produce a 'Raising Attainment Strategy'*

*SEF will also fund a family support co-ordinator.*

*The authority will build capacity in the central team by employing additional staff.*

*Planned appointments include:*

- A Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) project manager will be appointed to provide support that enables the successful implementation of evidence-based Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) interventions at individual school level*
- A professional learning co-ordinator will be appointed to lead on all aspects of professional learning to support quality improvement activity and close attainment gaps*
- A clerical team member will be appointed to co-ordinate all activities related to training and development and provide administrative support to the SAC funded team*
- A data analyst will be appointed to develop and support systems which enable more effective data analysis for improvement in schools*
- A part time educational psychologist will be appointed to lead evidence-based practice and effective interventions to close attainment gaps*
- A part time positive destinations project officer will be appointed to provide targeted support to an identified "at risk" cohort of learners. They will work in partnership with school teams and colleagues from youth services*

*The SEF plan includes family workers, a part-time teacher for youth services and a lead teacher for 'Pedagogy for Equity'.*

Positively, collaboration and effective partnerships emerge as key themes within several SEF plans. In the best examples, partners are involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of plans.

## Partnerships and collaboration

*Several partners, most notably children and families, social work, 'The Promise' implementation team, champions board, Skills Development Scotland, Developing*

*the Young Workforce and staff from the local college will contribute to utilising the fund and provide longevity to planning.*

*SEF will also support the creation of a local authority reading initiative. This programme will focus on the foundational literacy skills required to improve outcomes within reading and writing. This is being led by the central team, who are collaborating with other partners such as headteachers, speech and language therapists and educational psychologists.*

*The multi-agency hub model continues to be a significant element of the better wellbeing, better learning workstream. This approach, a collaboration with community learning and development, has been successful in supporting learners and families. Increasing the number of families supported in this way is one of the local authority's plus stretch aims.*

*The new strategic partnership steering group has been established involving a range of partners, both within and beyond education services. The purpose of this group will be to agree the SEF spend based on evidence of impact. Additionally, it will ensure a cohesive approach across the Scottish Attainment Challenge, PEF and other plans such as the raising attainment strategy, Community Learning and Development, educational psychology service, social policy and anti-poverty service. A key element of this is the creation of eight collaborative projects based on partnership working.*

There are a few examples of regional improvement collaboratives providing an effective vehicle for joint work and sharing practice.

### **Regional Improvement Collaboratives**

*The data coach role has been enhanced through SEF to ensure schools are adequately supported to improve attendance. The local authority will work in partnership with the regional improvement collaborative to realise their ambition in this area.*

*The local authority plan to renew their focus on collaboration and benchmarking through increased activity within and beyond the regional improvement collaborative.*

*Working in partnership across the local authority, the regional improvement collaborative and national networks will allow sharing of highly effective practice to support improvements in the effective use of targeted interventions.*

There is evidence that a few local authorities have made use of the [SAC Logic Model](#) in developing their approaches to SEF. This is helping to define outcomes and plan how impact will be measured.

### **Logic models**

*The equity strategy is presented in a logic model format which includes the high-level messages and outcomes of the strategy. This model is used to ensure alignment with Education Scotland advice and guidance related to the SAC.*

*The local authority has developed a localised version of the Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model with short-term goals outlined that direct their annual plan. Headteachers are familiar with the Logic Model and have reviewed how the model aligns to their own planning.*

*Workstreams have been agreed that will drive forward the logic model short-term aims. This has resulted in all contributors of workstreams, including partners, creating annual planning with outcomes and measures and termly action plans linked to the Logic Model.*

*The SEF strategy is presented in a logic model format which includes high level messages. This is based on the Logic Model from the SAC refresh. However, a detailed driver diagram is also included with short term goals and activities for 2022 - 23. The local authority has identified how progress will be monitored and reported within the detail of the SAC Logic Model.*

## 2.3 Pupil Equity Fund

Most local authorities are taking a more active role in supporting and monitoring the use of PEF. Many have taken account of the refreshed SAC guidance and other key documentation in refining their approaches. Evidence suggests an increased emphasis on ensuring that PEF investment leads to improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.

Several local authorities have recently updated PEF guidance which they provide to schools. This ensures alignment with the key messages of the SAC refresh and the [Pupil Equity Fund: national operational guidance 2022](#). Most local authority documentation sets out clear expectations of schools in terms of PEF planning. A few local authorities have recently developed PEF planning templates to ensure outcomes and measures are clearly articulated.

### Guidance

*The refreshed guidance outlines that schools must take a collaborative, evidence informed, ambitious and evaluative approach. Plans should detail the approaches to be taken to measure progress and embed quality assurance processes. This guidance is aligned with the national operational guidance March 2022.*

*Local PEF guidance has recently been updated. This aligns with key messages in the national PEF guidance. The need to target approaches to those living in poverty has been further highlighted. Key publications supporting the refresh of the SAC have been added, therefore ensuring the most up to date resources are shared consistently.*

*The Pupil Equity Fund framework developed last session is resulting in much more consistent and robust monitoring of the funding. It clearly outlines the responsibilities of headteachers, local authority staff and the attainment advisor in ensuring that PEF is used effectively to close poverty-related gaps and support recovery. It also embeds the processes of planning, monitoring and reporting of PEF firmly within the newly developed quality assurance process.*

*The planning format clearly supports schools to consider their gaps and set measurable outcomes to address these.*

Reviewing plans and discussing the impact of PEF are becoming integral parts of local authority quality assurance processes. This is enhancing the ability of central staff to more effectively tailor support to schools.

### Quality assurance

*A process of moderation of PEF plans was undertaken in line with the refreshed guidance. This provided helpful insights to inform staff development needs around*



*PEF planning and evaluation. This guided the offer of professional learning and targeted support to schools. Feedback and coaching support to headteachers and their senior leadership teams has focused on building capacity around effective planning, implementation and tracking of PEF interventions.*

*Changes to their quality school assurance visits ensure that there are robust discussions with schools regarding the impact of PEF. Schools will be expected to be able to discuss individual learners and how PEF resources are being used to support them. Schools are expected to be able to demonstrate the impact of PEF on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.*

*To quality assure PEF plans and implementation, the quality improvement officer (QIO) and attainment advisor (AA) undertook joint quality assurance of a representative sample of PEF plans against set criteria from national and local guidance. An analysis of this has been shared with the head of service, education managers and QIOs. The AA and QIO have created an action plan based on this analysis, which includes universal, additional and targeted support to schools, the creation of equity stakeholder group to inform the equity network themes and to help inform the support provided by the attainment advisor.*

*All PEF plans have now been collated and common themes extracted. The attainment advisor compiled an overview report of PEF plans and, in agreement with the SAC lead, has identified schools requiring further support to improve their plan. School visits by the SAC lead and/or the attainment advisor have been planned throughout November to ensure these improvements are made.*

*PEF impact visits continue to provide challenge and support and the authority is aiming to create a cycle of visits to ensure all schools receive a PEF impact visit over three years. Specific schools will be targeted who may require more intensive support, particularly those with significant levels of poverty. All PEF plans have been quality assured by the SAC lead, in partnership with the attainment advisor, and examples of effective practice were shared with all headteachers in September. This resulted in a shared understanding of expectations around effective use of data, evidence-based rationales and well-planned outcomes and measures for PEF.*

Schools are expected to report on impact of PEF within their Standards and Quality Reports (SQRs). However, there is less evidence that SQRs are scrutinised or used as effectively as PEF plans to inform further local authority activities.

Local authorities, alongside their attainment advisors, are offering a range of support to schools in relation to PEF. This includes providing data packs and training to help schools more easily identify poverty-related gaps. Information on specific interventions, professional learning and one-to-one sessions are being provided. Additionally, opportunities to share practice help to ensure that PEF is appropriately targeted.

## **Support**

*The local authority provides schools with data information packs at three intervals over the academic year. Headteachers can then use this data evidence to base decisions around PEF spend and interventions.*

*Using school-level electronic data profiles, each establishment is further supported to use a data informed approach to identify attainment gaps and to consider how PEF can be used to provide universal and targeted additional support.*

*Professional learning and support visits from the attainment advisor and SAC lead have been offered to build capacity in senior and middle management around effective PEF planning and implementation.*

*The quality improvement officer for equity and the attainment advisor support school leaders by providing regular drop-ins to promote discussion on strengths and areas of challenge. This is leading to increased understanding and confidence with school leaders in planning for equity.*

*Both the equity and inclusion officer and attainment advisor held a sharing effective practice event to raise more awareness of the recently published SAC refresh material and to further support planning.*

Support and guidance are provided around the financial management of the PEF. Regular meetings with finance officers and help with procurement aims to reduce some of the bureaucracy. This allows headteachers to focus on effective planning and implementation of the PEF. A majority of local authorities are taking steps to monitor spending and provide bespoke advice on reducing underspends. However, a few local authorities have developed plans to reduce underspends which have not yet been fully implemented.

## **Finance**

*The local authority employs a principal officer of equity to oversee both the PEF and SEF budgets. This officer monitors spend and supports headteachers with any finance-based queries as well as working in collaboration with other council departments and stakeholders. Headteachers comment very positively on the financial aspect of this support.*

*Work has recently been completed by a cross-sector group of headteachers and central team staff to refresh the PEF procurement framework. This organises partner and third-sector provider offers for schools to maximise best value and impact on outcomes for children and young people. This approach was recognised by headteachers as reducing PEF bureaucracy during the national PEF evaluation exercise in 2021.*

*Following on from a substantial underspend last session, monthly monitoring around PEF spend has been introduced at local authority level. This has ensured that service managers have the most up-to-date information of underspend within schools. The service managers and the attainment advisor will follow-up with schools where there is significant underspend. It is recognised that, for some schools, there were several barriers in spending their allocated PEF. Lack of available staffing, along with local authority recruitment processes had an impact on filling posts which had been identified in schools' plans for PEF. This session schools have been encouraged to use a 'stop, start, continue' model. This will ensure that the funds are redirected where recruitment of staffing presents as an issue.*

*Professional learning on financial monitoring will be provided for headteachers in November. In developing their skills and understanding, it is expected that headteachers will have increased confidence in managing their PEF budgets.*

*Senior officers emphasised the importance of ensuring that the PEF is allocated effectively and promptly including any carry forward from 2021-2022. Monthly meetings between the finance team, local authority officers and the attainment advisor are in place to review PEF expenditure. PEF progress updates are regularly shared with quality improvement officers, the senior leadership team and the raising attainment board. This work has helped the authority to have a clear overview of PEF spend and system needs. The impact can already be seen in actions taken by targeted schools such as improved planning or data analysis.*

*The central team is acutely aware that it has a significant PEF underspend. The lead central officer has been attempting to resolve this. However, due to delays from the finance team attributed to capacity issues and illness, an accurate picture of how*

*much underspend remains is yet to be confirmed. This has been escalated internally. Once resolved, it has been agreed that the AA will offer support and guidance to the finance team and share practice from other local authorities on how they can successfully monitor and track this fund.*

Most local authorities are seeing improvements in PEF planning and implementation. For example, improved planning based on contextual analysis which has led to a better understanding of poverty-related gaps as well as more robust monitoring procedures.

### **Improvements**

*School plans are now well-considered and based on robust self-evaluation including the views of children and young people, parents, partners, and staff. New and tighter systems are also in place to monitor and track the progress of individuals and groups. Schools and the LA are now in a good place to be able to evidence impact of raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.*

*The review of plans indicates that most schools have a clear and robust rationale underpinning their PEF spends; that schools' use of data in PEF planning has increased; and that outcomes and measures are more focused.*

*Headteachers have reported improved confidence and clarity in planning and reporting of PEF. AA discussions with headteachers evidence a strengthened focus on improving outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty.*

*QIOs describe school improvement plans as increasingly demonstrating improved PEF planning, monitoring and evaluation. Quality assurance procedures suggest stakeholder participation is an improving picture across the authority.*

There are a few examples of improved planning and implementation resulting in improved outcomes. However, in some cases this has not yet impacted on increased attainment levels.

### **Impact**

*The 2021-2022 data analysis showed that 89% of learners had met or partly met the intended outcomes of recorded PEF interventions.*

*The development of teacher competence through peer coaching, observation and fidelity tool development led to consistent high-quality pedagogy in relation to number talks. Through this approach increased numeracy attainment was achieved.*

*Findings showed mixed impact with lots of positive data around literacy and numeracy. However, these results did not translate into increases in attainment levels.*

A majority of local authorities recognise that further work is required to ensure the most effective use of PEF. They have already identified some next steps. These highlight that local authorities are at different stages in their improvement journey.

### **Next steps**

*The use of data and quantifying the gap in each school, continues to be an area for improvement. This will inform challenge and support from the link officer for each school.*

*The local authority is aware of the need to provide feedback on each plan as part of the quality assurance process. The attainment advisor will provide professional learning on identifying effective outcomes and measures, to build headteacher capacity and confidence.*

*The equity officer is currently in the process of revising local PEF guidance for schools to ensure that this aligns with the latest national guidance.*

*The local authority is considering plans to deliver PEF highlight sessions, as it did prior to the pandemic, in order to share effective practice.*

*One key area, strongly identified during the authority SAC collaborative event, was the importance of collaboration across schools in utilising PEF. As a result, the authority is in the process of setting up a service improvement group with a specific focus on enhancing collaboration across schools on the use of PEF.*

*Areas for continuous improvement include making outcomes more focussed and measurable, ensuring costings are accurate and that the full amount of PEF is committed. Closer scrutiny of PEF plans and spend will ensure the desired impact on the most disadvantaged learner.*

*There is still work to be done in supporting headteachers on improving the writing of outcomes and measures in planning for PEF and aligning funding more explicitly.*

## 2.4 Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund

The majority of local authorities have used the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund to employ virtual school headteachers or lead members of staff. Analysis suggests that their remits involve overseeing a range of targeted approaches. They also track and monitor the progress of children and young people who are care experienced. In a number of examples, they play a key role in supporting and facilitating professional learning for staff within central teams and establishments.

### **Virtual headteacher/lead members of staff**

*A multi-agency council group agreed last session that the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund be used to appoint a CECYP coordinator.*

*A quality improvement officer will also be funded 0.7fte to lead and co-ordinate the work the CECYP Fund is supporting.*

*The authority uses its care experienced funding in a holistic way, funding the virtual school programme as well as contributing to the Health and Social Care Partnership's Care Experienced Team.*

*The virtual headteacher continues to build capacity in the virtual school team through professional learning including evidence-based practice and the Compassionate and Connected Classroom, led by education psychologists.*

There is growing evidence that local authorities are adopting a multi-agency approach in relation to the planning, implementation and evaluation of approaches. This includes multi-agency oversight boards that focus on ensuring that this funding is having the maximum impact. There is some evidence that local authorities are continuing to review policies, plans and practices to enhance alignment with The Promise.

### Multi-agency approaches

*The CECYP Fund is managed by education in partnership with colleagues from health and social care. The operational work is led by an education officer who provides direct support to the implementation and evaluation of approaches funded through this spend.*

*The CECYP Fund is managed by colleagues from children's social work services in partnership with education. This year, governance of the fund will be overseen by the Raising Attainment Board.*

*The virtual headteacher, in collaboration with the Corporate Parenting Leads Group and stakeholders, developed a service design and delivery plan in direct response to The Promise and Plan 21-24.*

*There is evidence of strong collaboration between education and social work to create their 'Learning with Care' strategy and plan, which is closely aligned with The Promise, Getting It Right for Every Child and United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child.*

Almost half of local authorities reported that they were using the funding for specific roles such as home-link workers, coaches, mentors and practitioners. There is a particular focus on improving attendance, ensuring young people feel included and are ready to learn. Improving outcomes for children and young people who are care experienced is emerging as a key priority for most local authorities. This includes recognition for their personal achievements through appropriate awards such as Dynamic Youth and Saltire. A few local authorities continue to use the funding to support the delivery of Motivation Commitment and Resilience Pathways within establishments.

### Targeted approaches

*The coaches for 16+ work provide employability support to care experienced children and young people. This has resulted in a growing number of learners securing places in further education, employability programmes and employment.*

*One outcome from this partnership has included an increase in learners achieving Dynamic Youth and Saltire Awards.*

*A mentoring programme will be provided for young people who are living independently. This aims to provide emotional support and increase engagement in further learning or employment.*

*The Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund facilitates involvement from Motivation Commitment and Resilience Pathways. Feedback from establishments indicates initiatives are resulting in improved behaviour, increased engagement and raised self-esteem.*

There is growing evidence that funding is having a positive impact on improving outcomes. In some local authorities a greater number of children and young people who are care experienced are securing and sustaining positive destinations. Other progress includes improved attendance and a reduction in the number of exclusions.

Although there are signs of progress, it is acknowledged by some local authorities that there is still significant work required to improve the outcomes of those children and young people who are care experienced. It is clear in some instances that their

outcomes are not as strong when compared with other cohorts. As a result, a significant number of local authorities have targeted this as a focus within their 'plus' stretch aims.

There is evidence that for a minority of local authorities, there is a need to enhance their existing plans for implementation and evaluation of approaches. This will help to ensure maximum impact on those children and young people who are care experienced.

### Outcomes

*Attendance rates of care experienced learners are only marginally lower when compared to the rest of the general school population. There is also a continuing decline in the rate of exclusions of these learners.*

*For S5 care experienced learners there is an improving trend in the percentage achieving SCQF level 4 and 5 literacy and numeracy. In 2022 this percentage was greater than that of the virtual comparator.*

*Targeting senior phase young people with tutoring in literacy and numeracy at SCQF levels 3 and 4 has led to a reduced gap compared with their cohort peers. Attainment for this group of learners is above national results.*

*96% of leavers who are care experienced entered a positive destination in summer 2021 and 85% sustained this positive destination in the follow-up survey.*

*The authority has chosen to focus one of their 'plus' stretch aims on improving the attendance of care experienced children and young people, particularly those who are cared for at home or are previously care experienced.*

*Currently an agreement on how to use the fund to best support this group is still under discussion. This is an area that should now be a priority.*

## 2.5 Stretch aims

A key element of the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress is the requirement for local authorities to set stretch aims. The aggregation of this data has been published [The Scottish Attainment Challenge - local stretch aims 2022 to 2023](#).

Evidence suggests that the majority of local authorities used a wide range of data and contextual analysis to support their work in setting stretch aims. This included looking at attainment over time, considering average and best performance and reflecting on national trends.

### Data

*Senior leaders within the central team appropriately considered available data, including school-level, progress over time and national and comparator authorities.*

*The local authorities process for setting their stretch aims involved robust contextual analysis of current and historical data. The well-established tracking system allowed effective scrutiny of data relating to children impacted by poverty and comparisons between Q1 and Q5 cohorts.*

*The authority reflected on average and best performances as well as using their knowledge of the cohorts coming through from primaries three and six respectively.*

*The authority statistician worked with the AA to identify the data sources which would be useful in informing decisions about stretch aims. A dashboard was created which*

*displayed these data sets over time, made national and local comparisons and allowed for the addition of stretch aims for 2022-23.*

Consultation and collaboration with a range of stakeholders was identified by several local authorities as being key to ensuring collective ownership of stretch aims. This has resulted in schools having a better understanding of their part in contributing to the achievement of stretch aims. A significant number of local authorities have adopted a bottom-up approach when setting their stretch aims. Schools, on their own or in collaboration with central officers, have set their own attainment targets. This data has then been aggregated to arrive at the local authority stretch aims. Although not common, there is some evidence that a minority of local authorities set school level targets centrally.

### **Consultation and collaboration**

*The SAC project lead worked closely with the attainment advisor, central team leaders, all headteachers and partners to develop their stretch aims and SEF plan. This collegiate approach has resulted in the local authority having confidence their aims are ambitious.*

*The development of stretch aims was a very collaborative process, fully involving the headteacher reference group. This has ensured that there is a commitment from all schools, both for stretch aims and the monitoring and tracking process associated with them.*

*Strong collaboration across the authority ensured the process was based on effective self-evaluation, robust data analysis, engagement with stakeholders and alignment with the authority's education plan and new framework for inclusion.*

*School leaders were consulted through the raising attainment board performance subgroup and in focus group discussions during a leadership development day. The aims have now been agreed and shared with the raising attainment board, Elected Members in the lifelong learning committee and schools. Quality improvement officers have been working with schools to set school level aims in line with the local authority stretch aims.*

*There are plans to review and enhance local authority access to school and setting level data for tracking attainment. Secondary schools will engage in attainment meetings with central officers where school stretch aims linked to the local authority aims will be set.*

*The stretch aims process has been developed to fully take account of individual school target setting. This is a 'bottom-up' approach, where existing school tracking and monitoring and trend data is used to identify targets for learners working at early, first and second level in primaries 1, 4 and 7.*

*The local authority has used their collective data to identify and agree individual aims with each school based on their demographic data. These school level aims are calculated using data about current levels of performance, school context, historical trends, virtual comparator information and national and local averages.*

Several common approaches are emerging on how progress towards achieving the stretch aims will be monitored and evaluated. These include using local data systems or school level returns to analyse progress at key points throughout the session. Over a third of local authorities have reported that they will use attainment review meetings with establishments to help monitor progress. This will enable targeted support to be provided to establishments where appropriate

## Monitoring progress

*Progress towards achieving their stretch aims will be tracked as part of the local authority's refreshed quality improvement framework including link education and family manager visits, triannual monitoring of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels data and attainment review visits for secondary schools.*

*Progress towards achieving the ambitions of stretch aims will be monitored and tracked through the 2-18 tracking tool, triad meetings, progress in learning meetings and triannual monitoring of ACEL data and attainment reviews for secondaries.*

*Stretch aims will be monitored using existing processes including the upload of data predictions from each establishment in February and June. Headteachers have been asked to create school targets to mirror the ambition of authority stretch aims.*

Just under half of local authorities have reported that they will focus on improving the attendance of learners as part of their stretch aims. Improving outcomes and the attendance of children and young people who are care experienced is also emerging as a priority for local authorities. In some instances, local authorities have used different datasets within their plus aims as they feel that this is a more robust comparison of cohorts relative to the local authority context. Less common themes emerging from 'plus' aims include a focus on wider achievement and improving outcomes for learners with additional support needs.

## 'Plus' aims

*Additional aims have been set for pupil subgroups. These include free school meal and clothing grant entitlement, additional support needs and children and young people with care experience.*

*Following the care experienced children and young people data report in January 2022, key priorities were highlighted for 2022-23 which led to the setting of 'plus' aims in relation to children and young people with care experience.*

*The 'plus' stretch aims are targeted at children in receipt of free school meals and those who are care experienced. The attainment of both groups is lower than their cohorts both locally and nationally.*

*The authority encountered two key issues when developing their stretch aims. Firstly, they cannot use the nationally published data to evidence the poverty-related attainment gap as they have no learners in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 or 5 and, as such, they could not use this as a measure for their stretch aims. The most appropriate alternative measure of the attainment gap locally was to use free school meals data, as also advised in the framework document.*

*The Q1-Q5 comparison does not accurately reflect the local authority's poverty-related attainment gaps, or progress towards closing them. To account for this local context, 'plus' stretch aims include learners eligible for free school meals and/or school clothing grants.*

*Using free school meals data has allowed every school to have their own poverty-related attainment gap which is consistently measured across the authority. Not all schools have pupils in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 and 5.*



## Section 3

### 3.1 Next steps for continuous improvement

All local authorities have worked with their attainment advisor to identify next steps for continuous improvement. These relate to the individual progress made and describe how local authorities can further strengthen implementation of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. A few common themes have emerged.

#### Pupil Equity Funding

In over half of local authorities, Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is an area for continuous improvement. Refinement of approaches to planning, including moderation and quality assurance of PEF plans feature within these next steps. There is a focus on developing the use of data to inform planning and to demonstrate the impact of targeted interventions. This should support the sharing of evidence-based practice.

There is evidence that reducing PEF underspend is a key priority for some local authorities.

#### Pupil Equity Fund

*Implement peer to peer Pupil Equity Fund moderation quads for headteachers.*

*Begin to engage with schools on longer term PEF planning and strategies and structures to evidence impact on the closing the poverty-related attainment gap.*

*The central team and finance team will clarify PEF carry over from the 21-22 academic session and the remaining balance for 22-23 shall be confirmed. Once PEF underspend has been clarified, support for planning the spend in this session shall take place. The attainment advisor (AA) will explore, and share spend opportunities that are effective at raising attainment for children and young people impacted by poverty. An action plan to address underspend will be developed by the lead central officer and the AA to drive this forward.*

*The responsibility for PEF quality assurance continues to be with the team lead for excellence and equity and AA. Although link officers have agreed to become involved in this process and to analyse data collaboratively, this is taking longer to organise than expected. There are numerous reasons for this, but these barriers need to be overcome to ensure the sustainability of the Scottish Attainment Challenge mission.*

#### Data

Data continues to be identified as an area for further development within a majority of local authorities. Where identified, data literacy approaches, including confidence in analysis of data, are explicitly mentioned. Positively, there is evidence that these approaches are planned to build capacity at all levels of the system, including classroom practitioners. Additionally, use of data to evidence progress and impact permeates these next steps.

## Data

*Develop data literacy at all levels and increase confidence and capacity in using data to inform practice.*

*Ensure all relevant staff are confident in using dashboards to track and monitor progress towards meeting stretch aims.*

*Continue to ensure data literacy for all school staff: senior leaders, middle leaders, and classroom practitioners. Data literacy will increase leader and practitioner confidence in using evidence and professional judgement to predict attainment Curriculum for Excellence levels and implement necessary and timely learning interventions. Education managers will use face to face and virtual school visits to gain an understanding of progress.*

*Capitalising on improved Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level data analysis approaches to provide targeted and intensive literacy, numeracy and/or moderation and assessment support to establishments to raise attainment and narrow the poverty-related attainment gap.*

## Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding

Almost half of local authorities identified the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund within their next steps. There are indications that planning, outcomes and measures need to be strengthened. It is anticipated that this will result in improved outcomes for children and young people with care experience. In a minority of local authorities, involvement of young people with care experience in developing plans is mentioned.

## Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding

*Implementation of the new local authority care experienced children and young people self-evaluation toolkit to ensure appropriate progress is made towards achieving positive outcomes for children and young people with care experience.*

*Focus discussions on educational outcomes for children and young people with care experience across education and social work services through the Strategic Equity oversight group.*

*Develop an improving outcomes strategy (and action plan) for care experienced learners.*

*Establish clear roles for the quality improvement officer and the Care Experienced Children and Young People's coordinator within the Scottish Attainment Challenge plan.*

*To review the Care Experienced Children and young People Fund and ensure that clear measures are in place for the local authority to effectively monitor the impact of interventions or approaches on intended outcomes.*

## Stretch Aims

Almost half of local authorities have a next step relating to stretch aims. A few local authorities indicate intentions for stretch aims to be set at school level. This is hoped to support a collective and shared responsibility within each local authority. Best practice would involve schools having autonomy to set their own targets.

A common feature of these next steps is developing approaches to track and monitor progress. There is strong evidence that this will be undertaken through regular analysis of a wide range of data. In some local authorities, this analysis will inform where targeted support at school level is required.

#### **Stretch aims**

*Develop a shared understanding of responsibilities in achieving the authority stretch aims. Track and monitor progress of stretch aims.*

*Track and monitor the stretch aims and schools' targets and the contribution made by all primaries, junior high schools and senior secondaries.*

*The local authority will support head teachers to set stretch aims in relation to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Data will be monitored to ensure progress is being made for pupils in quintile 1. A local authority approach to collating and analysing data will be developed.*

*Create four-year stretch aims for senior phase after the National Improvement Framework review is complete.*

To a lesser extent, additional common themes include learning what works, evidence-based approaches, further refinement of governance approaches, Strategic Equity Funding and professional learning.

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