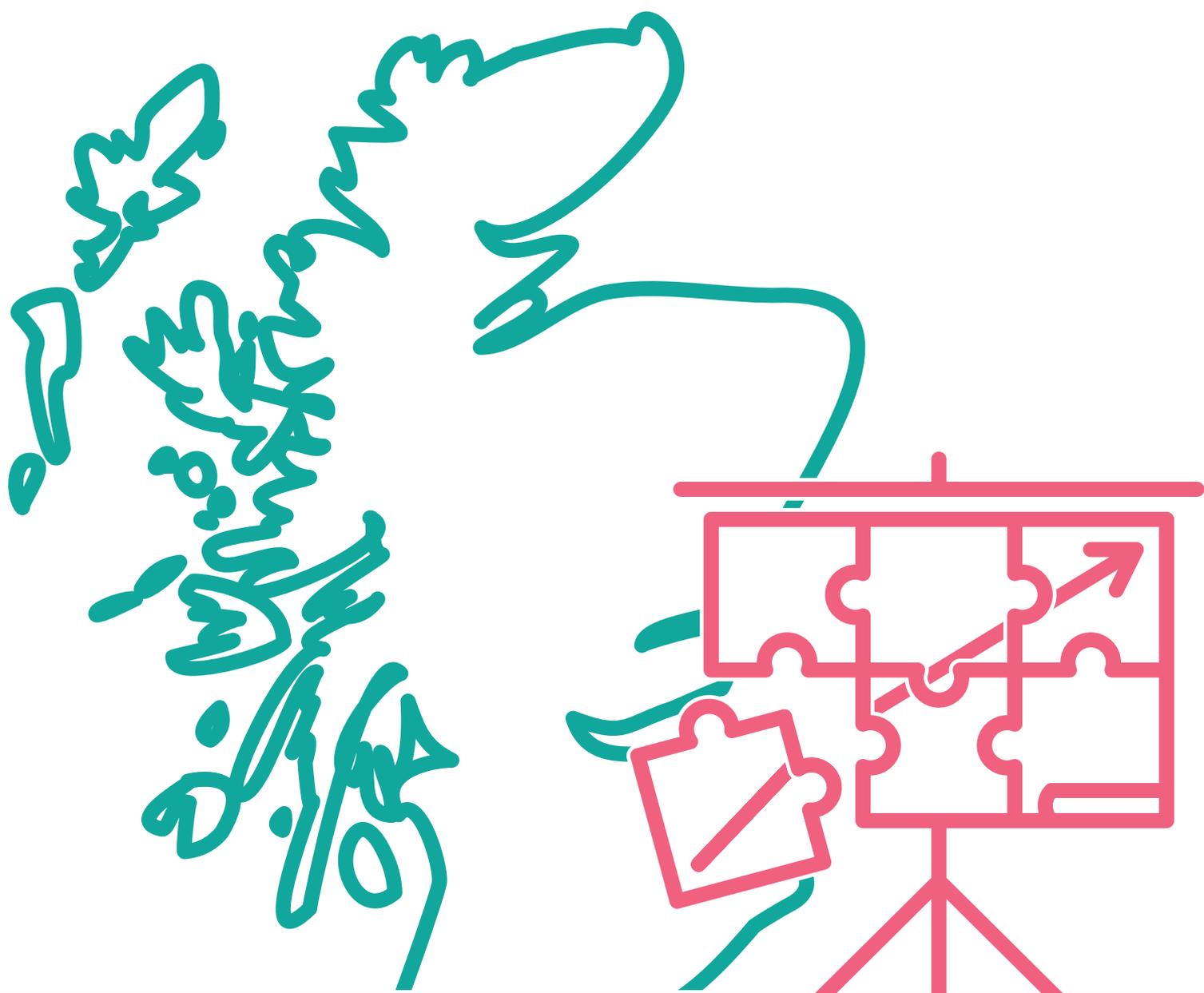


Scottish Attainment Challenge and partnerships with the Third Sector



This resource sets out how schools can 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. One of the primary levers for change is recognised as being partnership work with **families and communities** and it is here that the third sector can be of particular value.

Foreword



Carrie Lindsay,
ADES President

The introduction of different streams of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has allowed schools and local authorities to work directly with a large number of third sector organisations. Schools are already seeing how the third sector brings a different approach to complement their work in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

It can be a challenge to navigate through the offer from the third sector but this resource gives clarity to that process and makes it easier for schools to access relevant organisations. Schools alone can't tackle the impact of poverty on individual's outcomes at school and now more than ever a partnership approach is recognised as the way to progress.

Background

This resource has been produced for individual schools but will also be of interest to the people who help them make decisions e.g. Attainment Advisors, Quality Improvement Officers. It aims to improve understanding about the third sector and the potential it has for helping schools to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. It has been co-designed by Education Scotland, COSLA, ADES, the Scottish Government, the Third Sector (with particular thanks to Youthlink Scotland and the National Third Sector GIRFEC Project) and The Robertson Trust.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge

The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) in February 2015 to achieve equity in educational outcomes for young people, ensuring that every child has the same opportunity to succeed. It has a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Attainment Scotland Fund supports SAC and has been designed to help schools to achieve this aim for learners, by enabling schools to provide additional support and opportunities, particularly those adversely affected by deprivation. Now worth around £182m annually, it comprises funding for Challenge Authorities, Challenge Schools, Pupil Equality Fund (PEF) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Grant.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Third Sector

“Empowerment and collaboration for improvement happen at all levels in an empowered system. Partnerships are therefore a key cornerstone of this approach. It is essential that partners play a full role in an empowered system to improve outcomes for children, young people, families and communities. In an empowered system there is the opportunity to make connections with new individuals, groups and organisations, to work in partnerships that shape and lead learning and teaching and to help all learners achieve excellence.”

Empowering Partners Guidance

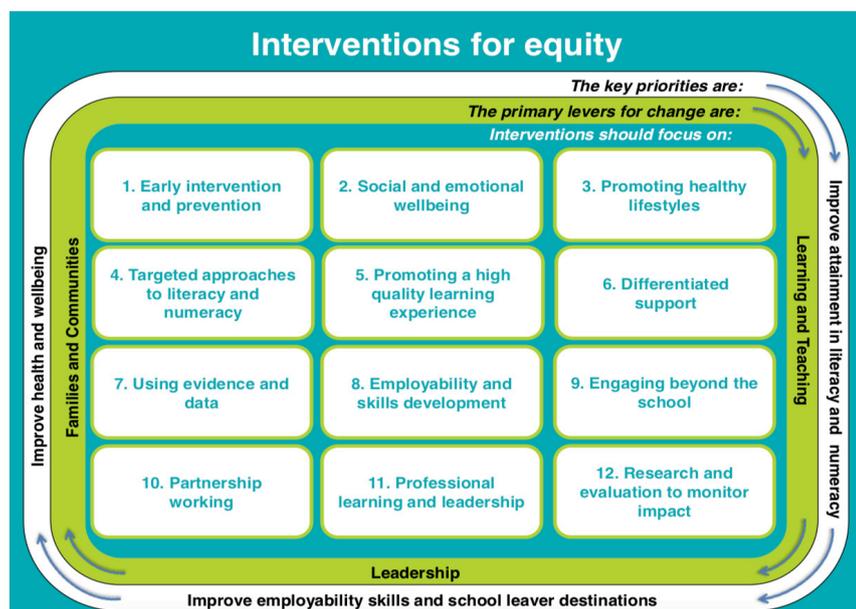
Third Sector is a term used to describe the range of organisations that are neither public nor private sector. It includes voluntary and community groups (both registered charities and other organisations such as informal community groups), social enterprises and co-operatives. These organisations may work in specific geographic locations or across Scotland as a whole and will vary in size and their capacity to engage with schools.

Third sector organisations (TSOs) are well placed to support delivery in partnership with schools. They bring experience of supporting young people and their families with an ability to forge strong community links. TSOs can be commissioned to deliver work for a fixed period, without the school needing to recruit extra staff for a particular piece of work. TSOs bring innovation and a skilled, competent and motivated workforce.

What type of services can the third sector provide?

Third sector organisations can support with the improvement of all three strands of the Scottish Attainment Challenge – literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing – but are particularly well-placed to support with the last of these.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge Interventions for Equity Framework has been designed to support schools to make decisions about how to select interventions and approaches which can help close the attainment gap. One of the primary levers for change is recognised as being partnership work with **families and communities** and it is here that the third sector can be of particular value. TSOs can offer an alternative learning experience within schools as well as the wider school community.



Interventions for equity
[click [here](#) to enlarge]

Where can you find examples?

These websites will give you inspiration and ideas about the types of services available, and evidence about what works in particular situations:

- [Education Scotland National Improvement Hub](#) contains case studies about interventions that have been used in Scotland, and which have shown encouraging results.
- [Amazing Things \(4th edition\)](#) features 26 youth award providers and includes information that helps young people, educators and employers to learn more about youth awards and how they contribute to young people's learning, life and work skills development.

Other resources which might be helpful include, but not limited to:

- [Tackling the attainment gap by preventing and responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#), by NHS Health Scotland.
- [Research reports: exploring ways to address the gap in evidence about 'what works' in family support services](#), by The Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS).
- [Pupil Equity Funding: Third Sector's Experiences in Glasgow](#), by Glasgow Council for Voluntary Services (GCVS) Everyone's Children Project.

Education Scotland and local authority staff, including Attainment Advisors, Area Lead Officers, Quality Improvement Officers and Community Learning and Development staff, will be able to advise you on interventions that have demonstrated impact in other schools.

How do schools identify their needs, engage with the appropriate Third Sector Organisation, and ensure that the needs identified are being met?

Start by having a conversation with your Attainment Advisor and/or your Quality Improvement Officer. They will be able to provide advice on developing partnerships with third sector organisations and supporting you to speak to the right people about commissioning arrangements and contracts as this advice will vary across the country.

Self-Evaluation and Planning

These websites will give you inspiration and ideas about the types of services available, and evidence about what works in particular situations:

- The starting point for any planning activity should be your Community Planning Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), Integrated Children's Service Plan, Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan and your own School Improvement Plan along with the National Improvement Framework.
- Further information is also available in the [National Operational Guidance for Pupil Equity Funding](#). Guidance on School Improvement Planning is also available on the [National Improvement Hub](#) and [How Good Is Our School? \(HGIOS4\)](#) (p.24 and 25, Leadership of Change and Challenge Questions).

- Ensure that information from a range of sources has been reviewed to help identify the needs of pupils. These could include:
 - data and information your school has access to
 - ask staff to identify needs and barriers they've observed for the pupils they work with who need additional support
 - consult with a broad range of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers, the third sector and communities to get their views and improve understanding of the circumstances affecting children's lives and learning.
- Use this information to identify themes and trends, and from this prioritise the top issues that need addressing. Where possible, focus on early intervention; support that can be put in place for a pupil at an early stage, before a situation escalates.
- In discussion with staff, parents, pupils and the wider community agree which issues can be addressed from within school resources and expertise and which are best supported by developing a partnership with a third sector organisation. [HGIOS4](#) (p.44 and 45, Partnerships) could be a useful resource.

Identify solutions and consider how you know if they are being effective

- Decide the outcomes you want to work towards i.e. what changes do you wish to see as a result of any intervention. Youthlink Scotland has produced useful guidance on [youth work outcomes](#) which may be a useful starting point along with guidance in the suite of "How Good is Our....." resources.
- Identify interventions or support you can put in place that could help to meet these outcomes. Look at resources (such as the websites mentioned above) to help you do this. Speak to other schools and your Attainment Advisor to see if they are aware of third sector organisations that can provide the required service. Connect with the range of umbrella bodies listed below who should be able to recommend both local and national third sector partners to meet your needs. [How Good Is Our Third Sector Organisation \(HGLOTSO\)](#) gives a range of examples of questions you can ask a third sector organisation to find out more about them.
- Even at this early stage begin to think about how you will know if the interventions / support you put in place have been successful. [HGIOS4](#) (p.20 and 21, Self-Evaluation) will provide some assistance.
- Try to set indicators which will help you to assess whether or not the intervention is meeting your needs. You need to know that these can be measured easily (and where possible, use information that you already gather), so that you're not over-burdened with collating data. The third sector organisation will often have outcomes measurement processes already in place. This [resource](#) produced by New Philanthropy Capital also has some useful guidance.

Commission a service

- Commissioning guidance, procurement policies and related governance arrangements vary from Council to Council across Scotland, so speak to your Corporate Procurement Team or relevant business partner, as well as your Quality Improvement Officer or Attainment Advisor for assistance as soon as you think you might be interested in working with the Third Sector. There are a range of approaches that can be taken to commission services. It is essential that you check the procurement policies and guidelines for your local area before entering into any partnership, as well as your Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme.
- Consider if other schools in the Local Authority area have similar needs to see if you can jointly commission work from third sector organisations, ensuring that a 'best value' approach is taken to the use of public money. This can have a number of benefits: sharing work associated with managing the contract; helping you to achieve economies of scale on pricing; and allowing the third sector organisation better adapt their service to your needs (e.g. a smaller third sector organisation may need to recruit more staff to deliver the service, which might not be feasible if only one school is commissioning work from them). Secondary schools can also speak to associated primaries about joint working. Please note this may result in increasing the value of the contract and therefore formal procurement procedures may be required (contracts with a value of £50k or above are considered to be 'regulated', under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and therefore subject to defined procedures that protect both parties).
- Engage with the Third Sector. You can either speak to local third sector organisations that you're already aware of or, as mentioned above, you can speak to an umbrella organisation that can put you in touch with relevant third sector organisations. Local CLD workers will also be able to provide support and can be accessed through your Local Authority. Identify some possible partners, meet them and see them delivering existing services. Check that they have similar vision, aims and values as the school and that they are someone you think you can trust and respect.
- Check that any third sector organisation you intend to commission has the necessary policies and procedures in place and understands the broader education context including knowledge of key policies such as the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and GIRFEC. A risk assessment will need to be carried out and it must be made clear when school policies e.g. child protection would take precedence over those of the third sector organisation.
- Agree at the outset ways of tracking or measuring progress against the outcomes and indicators that have been decided. Again, Attainment Advisors and Quality Improvement Officers will be able to assist. You might be able to use existing evaluation frameworks, see [National Improvement Hub, Defining Good Outcomes](#). Most third sector organisations will also have their own robust measurement systems in place so you probably won't need to start from scratch. Make sure you review the data at regular intervals, so that you can make changes and improvements if the work isn't delivering the outcomes and impact that you'd hoped.
- In accordance with your Council's procurement arrangements, and after the necessary due diligence work has been done, agree a Partnership Agreement or Contract which meets the needs of both parties and ensures accountability and agreed expectations including responsibilities, outputs and outcomes. This needs to be clear about what each partner will bring to the table and is particularly useful

if things go wrong or personnel change. It also should specify the timeframe for the agreement or contract i.e. 6 months, 1 year etc and how and when the service will be reviewed and adapted as necessary.

- **HGIOS4** (p.28 and 29, Management of resources to promote equity) may also be a useful resource.
- Ensure that good communication takes place across all stakeholders both within the school and across the wider community to inform people about the project and engage them as required in its delivery.

Review the Partnership

- Ensure that time is set aside on a regular basis to review progress, talk through any challenges and agree any changes to the programme that may be required to ensure the desired outcomes are met. A strong, honest relationship between the school and third sector delivery partners is essential for the service to develop and best meet the needs of young people and their families. It should be able to use existing evaluation frameworks, see National Improvement Hub, Defining Good Outcomes. Most third sector organisations will also have their own robust measurement systems in place so you probably won't need to start from scratch. Make sure you review the data at regular intervals, so that you can make changes and improvements if the work isn't delivering the outcomes and impact that you'd hoped.



Partnership and Leadership

How Good is Our School? (HGIOS4)

How Good is Our Third Sector Organisation? (HGIOTSO)

How Good is Our Community Learning and Development? (HGIOCLD)

Youthlink Scotland has produced [guidance on collaboration with youth work](#).

Wellbeing and Outcomes

The [Health and Social Care Standards](#) set out what we should expect when using health, social care or social work services in Scotland. They seek to provide better outcomes for everyone and to ensure that individuals are treated with respect and dignity and that the basic human rights we are all entitled to are upheld.

[Children in Scotland](#) website hosts a series of useful resources on wellbeing:

- [An Introduction to Wellbeing](#) helps organisations understand how their work contributes to the wellbeing of children and young people.
- [Wellbeing Bingo Game](#) helps practitioners to support young people to explore their wellbeing and make improvement.
- [Improving Children and Young People's Understanding of their Wellbeing](#) for teachers and practitioners to support children and young people's understanding of their wellbeing.

PEF and Commissioning

The [National Third Sector GIRFEC project](#) produced two papers:

- ["Collaborative Commissioning of Children's Services"](#) provides a basic overview of joint strategic commissioning.
- ["Pupil Equity Fund: Guidance for Third Sector Organisations"](#) aims to assist the third sector to understand how to link with schools and be considered for Pupil Equity Funding.



How can schools find out about third sector organisations, both local and national?

There are a significant number of umbrella groups and intermediary bodies that can provide information on both national and local third sector organisations active in any particular theme and/or area of Scotland. Some contact details are given below but this list is not exhaustive.

Each local authority has a third sector interface (TSI) that supports third sector organisations in the local area. You can find your local TSI [here](#), and contact them to ask for advice on third sector organisations to approach.

[Youthlink Scotland](#) is the national agency for youth work in Scotland and represents over 100 youth work organisations from the third sector and local authority youth work services. Further information and support regarding partnerships with youth work can be accessed through their [SAC-funded programme](#).

[Youth Scotland](#) is the largest non-uniformed youth organisation in Scotland and delivers quality youth work programmes, information, resources, training and support to community-based youth work. They support a network of over 1,200 local youth groups and will be able to provide local contacts.

The [National Third Sector GIRFEC Project](#) helps to develop or strengthen local third sector children and young people's forums across the country. The membership of these forums will give you a good idea of which third sector organisations are active in your area. Your local TSI (as above) should be able to give you contact details. The project is currently hosted within [Children in Scotland](#), the national network organisation for children's services.

[CCPS](#) is the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland. They represent and promote the interests of third sector social care and support providers in Scotland including those working with children and their families.

[Parenting Across Scotland](#) aims to support families in Scotland in bringing up their children. They do this by providing information and support for parents, carrying out research and influencing policymakers. They also host a range of resources which share and promote good practice in parenting support.

CLD Partnerships support Community Learning and Development approaches at a local level and are usually led by the Local Authority but will have a range of third sector organisations as members including youth work, adult and family learning and community development organisations. Individual plans for each Local Authority area can be found [here](#).

[SCVO](#) (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) is a national membership organisation for third sector organisations and social enterprises in Scotland. Their websites <https://goodhq.org/> and <https://getinvolved.org.uk/organisations/> are searchable directories of third sector organisations.

[Development Trust Association Scotland](#) (DTAS) supports the network of community-based Development Trusts across Scotland which are set up by local people to tackle local issues and to improve the quality of life in their community.

[ALISS](#) (A Local Information System for Scotland) is an online service hosted by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE), which can be used to help people find and share a wide range of local, regional and national services that help people to live well.

[Social Enterprise in Education Programme](#) is supported by the Scottish Government to work towards the delivery of enterprise activity in every school across Scotland.

How independent funders can support this work, and how they can be contacted

In addition to the funding available from the Attainment Scotland Fund, third sector organisations may be able to access additional funding and support from independent funders. Many grant-makers in Scotland are interested in funding interventions that improve equity and support young people to reach their potential. Grant-makers will usually only be able to fund third sector organisations and social enterprises, rather than schools directly.

Information about independent funders in Scotland can be accessed through the Scottish Grant-Making Trusts Group - <http://www.scottishgrantmakers.org/>

