



Equality Impact Assessment

National Improving Writing Programme

November 2023

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Equality Impact Assessment Record

Title:	Improvement Advisor
Senior Lead Officers	Marie-Claire Stallard Jan Adair
Directorate: Division: Team	West regional team (on placement from CYPIC Hub in Scottish Government)
Is this new policy or revision to an existing policy?	New programme of work

Screening

In May-June 2022 five local authorities were invited to join Wave 1 of a National Improving Writing Programme for schools interested in improving Curriculum for Excellence first level writing attainment.

The National Improving Writing programme has been approved for Wave 2.

Project Aim

Short term aim:

By June 2023 the 26 schools participating in Wave 1 Cohort 1 will achieve >70% in first level CfE.

Spread aim:

By June 2024 the five local authorities participating in Wave 1 will achieve >70% in first level CfE.

Baselines 0/26 schools, 0/5 local authorities June 2021

The **draft** Wave 2 aims are:

Short term aim:

By June 2024 the 25 schools participating in Wave 2 Cohort 1 will achieve >70% in first level CfE.

Spread aim:

By June 2025 the five local authorities participating in Wave 2 will achieve >70% in first level CfE.

Baselines to be confirmed with stakeholders.

Who will it affect?

This programme is expected to impact:

- The children in participating classes will have a different experience of being taught writing in their classroom.
- The teachers participating will have a different experience and method of teaching writing to their peers not involved in the programme.

The programme is not far reaching at this time (26 schools in Wave 1, an additional 25 schools in Wave 2). Should the outcome measures result in the level of impact expected from the process measures then additional waves are expected, increasing the reach of the programme. *As a result we expect a proportionate EQIA will be required.*

The Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

In undertaking this assessment, Education Scotland has assessed the impact on each of the protected characteristics and has considered measures against the three needs of the general equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;

- advance equality of opportunity; and,
- foster good relations.

Key Findings

Who will the work affect?

This work addresses the gap in attainment evident at the end of CfE first level. This is targeted at P4 pupils to support schools in closing the gap and P5 pupils who need the gap to be closed as quickly as possible. This work relates to an area where there are **known inequalities** in children's outcomes.

Impact on policy direction

Should this work be successful it may have an impact on how our delivery partner, Education Scotland, delivers writing work and/or addresses quality improvement. There is no significant commitment of resources.

1. **Advance equality** – yes, this programme will be offered to local authorities where outcomes for children are poorer, increasing the equity of schooling for participating children.
2. **Eliminate discrimination** – to an extent, yes, there may be inadvertent discrimination in classes due to people's inherent biases. This work focuses on standardising how tools for writing are taught, reducing the unequal offer children may currently be experiencing. It offers tools and examples to increase equity so that specific groups at-risk of not making appropriate progress can be catered for in a tailored way.
3. **Foster good relations** – yes, the focus on creating the conditions, in-person training and practical delivery focused on outcomes are intended to create a positive atmosphere. Evaluation of the first wave evidences very good relationships built through the programme with class teachers, school leaders, local leads in local authorities and colleagues in Education Scotland.

Will your work affect other policies?

This work centres on Getting It Right For Every Child. Though it is not designed to address the poverty related attainment gap, it is expected that there will be overlap with the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The SHANARRI Wellbeing Indicators are likely to be useful for guiding us on other specific groups who may be disadvantaged: poverty, disability, illness, looked after children, and children from the Traveller community.

Might it inadvertently disadvantage some people?

This work is intended to improve quality, it is driven by the belief that **without equity there is no quality**. If/when issues have arisen to date which we anticipate could impact equity, or disadvantage people in some way, aspects of delivery are being adjusted to mitigate the risk.

What might prevent the desired outcomes being achieved?

Not all P4 teachers in the identified schools are participating in the training, and those that are may not be available to teach P4 in the upcoming year. It is important to follow-up and maintain measurement after the initial success achieved to ensure outcomes are met (not only short term gains).

Stage 1: Framing

Results of framing exercise

Since 2017/18 the national writing data have demonstrated a pronounced gap in attainment at first level writing. Last year (2021/22) 30% of P4 aged children didn't reach their expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) writing outcomes in Scotland. Though an improvement from the previous year (33%) this is not solely due to COVID-19 and its broader impact, data prior to 2020 illustrates poorer outcomes at first level. The equity gap between the most and least deprived also increased.

Protected characteristic: age

The outcomes of this work should positively impact children in the targeted classes (mainly primary 4, children age 8-9). The national data (and local data in targeted areas) illustrates that this group is not achieving at expected levels.

The programme also includes primary 5 children who did not achieve CfE First level at the expected time (end of P4). The outcome should again be a positive impact by reducing the gap between these children and their peers, enabling them to catch-up with the stage typically expected of their peers.

Protected characteristic: disability

The programme is delivered in a combination of in-person and online sessions. Prior to the first session a "connectivity session" is held to ensure everyone has the technology to participate in the course and tools are introduced so that participants are familiar with any technical functions.

All slides are available before training and are in large and accessible fonts and formats following COLF principles. MS Teams is used with the option for subtitles is available.

Participants are asked if they have specific or additional requirements to access the training ahead of the course. This allows for adaptations for participants. Additional questions have been added to the programme evaluation to explore whether participants have encountered barriers following the event.

This programme does not dictate "how" to deliver writing skills in a classroom (it focuses on what a good lesson must include), as a result any tailored provisions already in-place within schools are expected to continue. There should be a neutral impact on children with disability, and potential for a positive impact as teachers become better equipped at identifying the root causes of children's writing progression.

Protected characteristic: gender reassignment

We do not foresee any impact.

Protected characteristic: marriage or civil partnership

We do not foresee any impact.

Protected characteristic: pregnancy and maternity

Of the protected factors, we have identified pregnancy/maternity and illness as potential barriers to access. To address this we are working with local leads to ensure the training offer is repeated so that anyone who has been absent can access this learning as soon after their colleagues as is practical.

Protected characteristic: race

There is a risk that people with English as an additional language do not fully understand the content. Expert input is included in the programme to support teachers and prevent this from negatively impacting children.

To mitigate the issue for staff participating in the programme, slides are shared ahead of sessions and MS Teams is used so that content can be translated in live time if necessary.

Protected characteristic: religion or belief

The scheduling of sessions has taken major religious festivals and events into account. Dietary requirements are requested and supported at in-person events.

Protected characteristic: sex

We do not foresee any impact.

Protected characteristic: sexual orientation

We do not foresee any impact.

Interaction with Other Policies (Draft or Existing)

Gaelic language

Up to this point only English-medium schools have taken part in the programme. If there is enough interest from Gaelic-medium schools we will explore how to revise the content for written Gaelic. To prevent any negative impact on participants from these schools we anticipate holding a cohort tailored specially for Gaelic schools with input from the Gaelic lead in ES and partners in affected local authorities.

Barriers to attendance

It is important to us that participants across Scotland all have equal access to this programme. Participants travelling more than 2 hours to an in-person session will have paid accommodation offered to them. Those from island communities will also be compensated for the costs of flights.

Extent/Level of EQIA required

Given the small reach at this time a proportionate EQIA has been taken. This EQIA has been approached as a continuous process and the programme's delivery plan has regular checks built-in. If future waves of the programme are approved we will review and broaden our consultation to reflect the population we intend to reach.

Stage 2: Data and evidence gathering, involvement and consultation

We will hold an equalities discussion with our Local Leads on 31st May 2023. Our intention is to explore any unseen barriers to participation in Wave 1 to eliminate them for Wave 2 and beyond.

We have asked teachers to explore sub-populations within their class who are not achieving and will explore if there are characteristics or demographics which can be further served through this programme to have a positive impact on their achievement.

Stage 3: Assessing the impacts and identifying opportunities to promote equality

Population identified	Mitigating action	Justification
Those with more specific needs might not make appropriate progress (since the programme targets the general population to address the differing outcomes deepening on school/geography in Scotland, not sub-groups). Good assessment makes it clearer for teachers to understand who needs additional support.	The importance of differentiating in the classroom is highlighted and reiterated during the programme.	Children deemed “non-writers” cannot be further alienated by this work, also important to make sure that high achievers are not coasting while focus is elsewhere.
Teachers who, for a range of reasons are not able to teach writing effectively to all pupils.	Pedagogy input added to the standard Writing programme.	Led by Education Scotland Literacy Officers this content is high quality and up-to-date. No teacher excluded, or children penalised for the gap in teacher knowledge.
Children with specific needs which would not be addressed by a universal programme.	Tools given and time spent on understanding root cause issues for those not improving as	Ensure the gap doesn't widen for the few children with specific needs.

	<p>expected, and understanding data for different population sub-groups.</p> <p>Experts identified to address identified groups: occupational therapists, Speech and Language therapists, Education as a Second Language specialists etc.</p>	<p>Next steps are to film some of these experts so that lack of contact with experts does not create a barrier to access.</p>
<p>Potential barrier to small local authorities without access to many central resources.</p>	<p>Explored other ways to have LAs supported. Attainment Advisors a valuable asset (but not an appropriate substitute to local lead), alternative local lead support such as HT or DHT with availability to leave school</p>	<p>Two local leads are a requirement of the programme. But having central resource should not be a limiting factor in participation. Early Creating the Conditions conversations can explore other options.</p>

Stage 4: Decision making and monitoring

As a result of this review we are satisfied that this programme is likely to have a positive impact on children at-risk of not achieving their expected level of CfE first level writing.

We will monitor outcome and process data throughout the programme, and evaluation data after every session to ascertain the impact of the programme and any risks arising.

Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action

Have positive or negative impacts been identified for any of the equality groups?	Yes, positive impact on children age 8-9 years old in schools with a lower than average attainment rate.
Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 ¹⁷ ?	No
If the policy is indirectly discriminatory, how is it justified under the relevant legislation?	
If not justified, what mitigating action will be undertaken?	

Monitoring and Review

An evaluation plan is created at the beginning of Wave 1 with feedback required following every session. Learning is made in “real time” building improvements into sessions based on participant feedback, and refining of content for future sessions based on their reflections.

A formal review of progress will take place after each wave when ACEL outcomes are published and formal evaluation is submitted for the programme.

Stage 5 - Authorisation of EQIA

Please confirm that:

This Equality Impact Assessment has informed the development of the National Improving Writing Programme Wave 2 (delivered by CYPIC in partnership with Education Scotland)

Yes

No

Opportunities to promote equality in respect of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation have been considered, i.e.:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- Removing or minimising any barriers and/or disadvantages;
- Taking steps which assist with promoting equality and meeting people's diverse needs;
- Encouraging participation (e.g., in public life)
- Fostering good relations, tackling prejudice, and promoting understanding.

Yes

No

If the Marriage and Civil Partnership protected characteristic applies to this policy, the Equality Impact Assessment has also assessed against the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in respect of this protected characteristic:

Yes

No

Not applicable

Declaration

I am satisfied with the equality impact assessment that has been undertaken and give my authorisation for the results of this assessment to be published on the Education Scotland website.

Name: Dr David Gregory

Position: Strategic Director (Interim)

Authorisation date: 29 November 2023



(signature)

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