Mainstreaming Report

Education Scotland

2023 - 2024

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Introduction and Background

Introduction

This report provides an update on the progress we are making to mainstreaming equality as an organisation. The introduction of the Equality Act 2010 harmonised a range of existing legislation and policy. The Act introduced a new public sector equality duty which replaced duties relating to race, disability and gender. Secondary legislation was introduced in 2012 which implemented "specific duties." The purpose of the legislation is to ensure that public bodies consider how they are positively contributing to a more equal society through advancing equality and good relations in their daily functions. In particular, how they:

- take effective action on equality.
- make the right decisions, first time round.
- develop better evidence-based policies and practice; and
- act in a way that is more transparent, accessible and accountable, and deliver improved outcomes for all.

The Purpose of the Equality Duty of Education Scotland

The purpose of the Public Sector Equality Duty is to ensure that Education Scotland, like other public bodies, complies with equality legislation appropriate to its role as employer and educational improvement agency. The legislation outlaws direct discrimination (including, for example, discrimination by association, perception and arising from a disability), indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of the protected characteristics of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnerships;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including colour, nationality; ethnic or national origin);
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Our Approach

In 2022, Education Scotland introduced an Equality Strategy for Education Scotland that demonstrates our continued commitment to embedding an ethos and practice of equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. It outlines the equality outcomes we aim to deliver over the next few of years. Education Scotland's Equality Strategy not only aims to capture our work to improve outcomes for those who share protected characteristics, but also those whose life chances are impacted by wider inequalities (e.g. those with non-protected characteristics such as care-experience and socioeconomic barriers).

In developing this strategy, we took a collaborative approach, working with colleagues from across Education Scotland Directorates to ensure our strategy, and the delivery of it, is owned by

everyone. We also invited external members from our Advisory Board and Scottish Government Equality Unit to advise and provide support and challenge during the development of the Strategy (Equality Strategy 2022 - 24). Union representatives were also involved to provide assistance in our internal focus. The most recent Mainstreaming Report on the Equality Strategy can be found here: Mainstream Report

The development of the Equality Strategy took into account of the need to demonstrate impact and outcomes resulting from the delivery of our objectives. Using a logic model methodology, we outlined the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes we wished to achieve. The logic model effectively captures the changes we wish to make internally and externally and clearly demonstrates the links between our activities and the outcomes we hope to achieve. Considering the national context of education reform, the Equality Strategy was designed to be a live, iterative strategy, reflective of changing needs, outcomes, and on-going evidence as we engage in activities to support our objectives. We are mindful of the complexity of the issues we are attempting to address and the fact that many of our activities depend on working through others to achieve long-term outcomes.

Given that Education Scotland will be replaced with a new Inspectorate and a refocussed National Agency for Scottish education in 2025, this mainstreaming report is focused on our short-term outcomes. These are the outcomes we have the most direct control over and where we will be able to confidently link our achievements with our specific activities. However, the longer-term outcomes identified during the development of the strategy will continue to fully inform all that we do as we continue to work in a period of change.

Short-term Outcomes

For the purpose of this report, we will focus on the internal and external short-term outcomes as outlined below.

Internally focused short-term outcomes
- More candidates from diverse backgrounds apply for roles.
- All Education Scotland staff increase their awareness, understanding, knowledge, confidence and skills around equality and diversity and the benefits of being a more diverse organisation.
- Education Scotland has improved insights and targeted actions to improve the equality and diversity of our organisation.

Externally focused short-term outcomes
- Increased availability of accessible equality and diversity information for parents/families.
- Education practitioners increase their knowledge, understanding, awareness, confidence and skills in relation to equality and diversity issues, including practice.
- Education practitioners increasingly indicate they are likely to implement learning from ES in practice/make changes to processes.
- Leaders across all professional levels are increasingly cognisant of the barriers to promoted posts for certain equalities groups and proactively work to break down these barriers.

Progress in meeting short-term internally focused outcomes

1. More candidates from diverse backgrounds apply for roles

Education Scotland's recruitment activity sits under Scottish Government resourcing policy and processes. Our approach is guided by the vision and values across Scottish Government, which sets the standard and policies for embedding inclusion into our recruitment and resourcing policies and processes.

The most recent data can be viewed at [Workforce Diversity and Inclusion in the Scottish Government](#). The . Specific plans to increase the workforce diversity are set out in the Scottish Government's policies:
- [Race Recruitment and Retention Action Plan](#)
- [Recruitment Retention Plan for Disabled People](#)
- [Gender equality in the workplace](#)
- Socio-Economic Diversity Action Plan (not currently published externally)
- Transgender and Non-Binary Equality and Inclusion Policy (not currently published externally)

In January 2022, the Scottish Government launched an Employee Passport to provide a framework for colleagues and managers to discuss any circumstances that might impact on a staff member's work and any adjustments that might help. These circumstances include health conditions, caring responsibilities and disabilities, but really, it can be absolutely anything that impacts a staff member at work. The passport is open to all, it is voluntary and is aimed at creating an inclusive and supportive environment which allows everyone to perform at work at their best. It is also part of work by the Scottish Government to make the organisation an employer of choice for disabled people. The Equality Impact Assessment for the Employee Passport can be found [on the Scottish Government website](#). The Employee Passport can contribute to creating an inclusive working environment in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland, contributing to efforts to helping us retain diverse employees and attract diverse candidates applying for roles.

Positive Action to Recruit on Professional Learning and Leadership Programmes

In the co-design and construction of the [Building Racial Literacy](#) (BRL) programme in 2021/22, it was agreed with design partners to introduce protected places on the course for educators of colour. The aim of this approach was twofold:
1. to ensure affinity spaces to support the learning of Black and minority ethnic programme participants, and
2. to break down structural barriers to promotion in the Scottish education system.

1. Affinity Spaces
Alongside their self-directed learning on the programme, participants had three opportunities to engage in collaborative learning based on their racial identity, their professional identity and the region in which they worked. In 'The Power Of Affinity Spaces'(2020), Aparna Rajagopal-Durbin identifies the impact of spaces for marginalised groups as providing healing, connection, safety and the 'de-centring of dominant identities.'

2. Systemic and structural barriers

In 'Teaching in a diverse Scotland: increasing and retaining minority ethnic teachers' (Scottish Government, 2018), Black and Minority Ethnic teachers shared their lived experiences of barriers to opportunities and promotion. The report found that:

> "non BME teachers and school leaders lack the experience of engaging and working with and within a diverse workforce. This leads to a mixture of awareness of the daily lived experiences of minority ethnic people. The lack of experience and awareness or the presence of racial prejudice impacts on recruitment and selection into programmes of initial teacher education as well as the appointment and promotion of minority ethnic staff into senior positions" (Scottish Government, 2018, p. 10).

Protecting places for applicants provides a positive action approach to increasing the number of educators with diverse perspectives in leadership roles in Scotland.

Broadening this approach

The learning from the protected places recruitment onto BRL informed Education Scotland's work in the design of a pilot programme, Making Sense of System Leadership (MSSL). Each induction had a limited number of places. It was recognised that protected places for those who self-identified as having a protected characteristic (under the Equality Act 2010) would be a positive, small step towards breaking down these systemic and structural barriers. In the recruitment of MSSL, there were **161** applicants, with **14** applicants self-identifying as having a protected characteristic. (**9** based on religion or belief, **2** on race, **2** on disability and **1** on sexual orientation). This meant that priority placing was given to these applicants in the case of over-subscription for specific inductions.

Important to note that most Professional Learning and Leadership programmes in Education Scotland currently delivered online (for example Aspiring to Middle Leadership) don't have a cap on numbers so the same approach hasn't needed to be taken. We still recognise, however, that ongoing engagement with marginalised groups is needed to continue to attract diverse applicants onto programmes and into our workforce.

2. All Education Scotland staff increase their awareness, understanding, knowledge, confidence and skills around equality and diversity and the benefits of being a more diverse organisation.

3. Education Scotland has improved insights and targeted actions to improve the equality and diversity of our organisation.

New Equalities Staff Network

To take forward the short-term internal outcomes 2 and 3, a new internal Equalities Staff Network for Education Scotland staff was launched in August 2023. In the pre-network baseline survey (47 respondents), 34.1% agreed or strongly agreed that ES consistently embeds diversity, inclusivity and equalities across the org. This indicated a strong need for the Equalities Staff Network which was developed by the new Equalities team. Introduced with a Connect with Colleagues session in June 2023 (85 attendants), the network now has 50 staff members

(including the Equalities team who facilitate it) with representation from all directorates. It is designed to be a safer space for:

- people experiencing inequalities related to protected and non-protected characteristics, signposting relevant support and wider Scottish Government staff networks, such as the Disabled Staff Network.
- everyone to learn, build their skills and raise issues of equality, accessibility and inclusion.

The network shares meeting minutes, resources, events, research and opportunities via a Microsoft Teams space. With monthly online meetings (generally 15 – 30 attendees), the network invites members to suggest agenda items and engage in professional learning, with two sessions so far on the language of diversity and digital accessibility (100% of feedback form responses gave it a five star rating).

The network has become a safer space for staff to raise issues and engage in difficult conversations related to equality and diversity. For example, members brought forward the issue of the lack of physical accessibility guidance and support for Scottish Government and Education Scotland office buildings. This issue is currently being taken forward with the support and expertise of the Scottish Government's internal Disabled Staff Network. Furthermore, psychological safety has also been a recurrent theme in discussions. As a result, members identified individual and organisations actions that can be taken, which were shared with a series of staff bulletin items and a staff blog.

In a Jamboard exercise in December 2023, members did not identify anything the network should stop doing, however, they requested that the network continues to:

- use the staff bulletin to share information
- be a vehicle to feedback to senior leaders on challenging topics
- create a safe space for staff to connect.

It is still too early to identify the substantive impacts of this network, with further evaluation planned for June 2024. However, anecdotal and qualitative evidence suggests that the network has increased awareness of equality and diversity issues across the network members and through its engagement with internal communications (e.g. staff bulletin).

Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) helps us look at how our work impacts on people because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. An EQIA process is not just about identifying (and mitigating) negative impacts. It is also about proactively looking for opportunities to promote equality..

Last reporting period, we described the efforts made to help colleagues understand when and how to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs). Procedures and processes were improved with the inclusion of:

- a step-by-step flowchart to provide staff with a clear overview of the EQIA process
- a screening survey to help staff determine whether an EQIA is needed
- participant information sheets and standardised consultation templates
- Guidance for staff to help them understand the role and responsibilities of the Lead Officer throughout the EQIA process

- Guidance for staff to help them understand the legislative context of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 (Scotland)
- Training material to help staff become confident consultation facilitators
- Links to reliable evidence sources for obtaining pupil and practitioner data
- Consultation feedback survey as a driver for continuous improvement

As a result, we saw a welcome increase in the number of EQIAs that were been developed over the last reporting period, with over half of all staff having participated in at least one EQIA, of which 42% self-declared as having no prior experience of taking part in one before.

For this reporting period, we have seen yet another increase of the number of EQIAs undertaken: from 6 EQIAs in 2022 – 2023 to 10 EQIAs in 2023 – 2024. The ongoing impact of this work is evident and positive. Further consideration will be given to maintain and accelerate this progress and how learning from this improvement could be applied to Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA) and Island and Rural Communities Impact Assessments.

Internal Professional Learning

As part of yearly Objective Setting and Performance Appraisal processes, every staff member is required to identify one mandatory Diversity Objective. Staff at Education Scotland are also encouraged to engage in internal professional learning and to keep a Personal Learning Plan to help keep track and plan for their ongoing development. While it has been difficult to gather data on these objectives and personal learning plans, there has been some evidence of staff engaging in equalities professional learning and identifying targeted actions for improvement through the Equalities Staff Network, Connect with Colleagues sessions, the Building Racial Literacy programme and related sessions that have been offered to some teams.

Our Connect with Colleagues online sessions generally run over a couple of days each month. They are a series of informal information sharing sessions, which provide space to learn, collaborate and connect. The following sessions included some elements of equalities:
- Creating accessible digital content (June 2023)
- Equalities Staff Network & Mandatory Diversity Objectives (June 2023)
- The Scottish Attainment Challenge: Framework 2023-24 (August 2023)
- Adolescent health and wellbeing: how are Scotland's young people doing? (November 2023)
- Introducing the Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework (November 2023)
- Youth Work and Schools Partnerships (January 2024)
- Strengthening Curriculum Design for Social Justice, Rights and Equalities: a Big Ideas Approach (January 2024)
- Scottish Attainment Challenge Refresh and Additional Support Needs Interconnectivity (February 2024)

To help those unable to attend or who wish to review the learning, slides and recordings from the Connect with Colleagues sessions are accessible to all staff at Education Scotland.

Some professional learning programmes offered by Education Scotland have also welcomed members of Education Scotland to join as participants and/or facilitators, learning alongside educators and system leaders. For example, between 2022 and March 2024, 16 staff members

have experienced the Building Racial Literacy programme as a participant and/or facilitator, including an inspector, officers from the following teams: Curriculum Innovation, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities, Community Learning and Development and Professional Learning and Leadership.

In addition to this, bespoke racial literacy one-day sessions were offered to some teams, including the Leadership and Extended Leadership Team in May 2023. From the evaluation responses received from the Leadership Team session, 100% agreed or strongly agreed that their knowledge and understanding increased. Feedback on the most valuable aspects of the session included:

> "The learning, so clearly evidence-based, which was shared with us during the day. The opportunity to discuss opportunities and challenges related to anti-racist education openly and in a safe space."

> "Having the time to think and reflect on the issues as they present themselves in our roles."

> "I thought the training was really worthwhile - it has definitely increased my awareness and made me more determined to act as well as to know. I think, as discussed, we should maximise Leadership Team engagement at this stage to widen participation and awareness of this important work across Education Scotland."

Following this session, a session on racial literacy has been planned for Corporate Services staff (approximately 60 people) in March 2024, with opportunities to revisit the learning at a future date.

As a result of many of these engagements with anti-racist professional learning, several Education Scotland staff members have been proactive in identifying and implementing anti-racist actions in their different areas of work and this has led to the strengthening of equalities and anti-racist education in Education Scotland professional learning offers and programmes, evidenced in this section and this section of the report.

Progress in short-term external outcomes

1. Increased availability of accessible equality and diversity information for parents/families

Education Scotland worked in partnership with primary and secondary schools, the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (SCILT) and the British Deaf Association to produce a range of accessible equality and diversity Information on Parentzone Scotland for British Sign Language users (https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/bsl/). Seven new webpages were developed in written and video format on Parentzone with 530 page views in 2023.

We also worked in partnership with relevant partner and stakeholder groups to develop case studies highlighting a range of programmes and approaches on working with parents and families focusing on equality and diversity. The resources can be found here:
- https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practice-exemplars/engaging-parents-in-language-learning-moorfoot-primary-school-and-garvel-deaf-centre-inverclyde-council/; (139 page views in 2023)
- https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/good-practice-in-working-with-deaf-learners-their-parents-and-families-bsl-plan/; (629 page views in 2023)
- https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/equality-and-equity-toolkit/; (2295 page views in 2023)
- https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/bsl-toolkit-for-practitioners/ (1579 page views in 2023)

In addition, a bank of resources was created for parents and families to support literacy and numeracy (Read, Write, Count (RWC) Activities for Families). As reported in last year's Mainstreaming report, the resources are also hosted by Edinburgh University and we do not have access to their data. The number of page views recorded on Education Scotland's website has increased very slightly, from 68 page views last reporting period to 78 page views this year. The number of page views is likely to be an underestimate if we were able to include the Edinburgh University data.

The number of page views indicates that we are beginning to impact on our short- and medium-term outcome (parents/carers are increasing accessing information about equality and diversity). More qualitative data and intelligence will be helpful moving forward to enable us to measure the value and usefulness of the materials. In the medium term, we would hope to see evidence of the materials making a difference to parents' and carers ability to support their children, and horizontal impacts across other parents and carers.

While it can be harder to track the indirect impact on families of such work, it is worth noting the activities which help practitioners improve their support for parents and carers. As such, Education Scotland provides a range of modules and professional learning opportunities to help increase awareness of equality and diversity for practitioners supporting families:
- Working Together: Equality and Equity Modules (993 page views)
- Supporting Transitions of Young People with Additional Support Needs (685 page views)
- Experiences and Challenges of Attending School, College and University as a Deaf Young Person (published in February 2024)
- Delivery of Family Learning Additional Support Needs professional learning sessions for practitioners and educators in the West Partnership (120 attendees online) and Renfrewshire Council (15 attendees in person).

2. Education practitioners increase their knowledge, understanding, awareness, confidence and skills in relation to equality and diversity issues, and practice.

3. Education practitioners increasingly indicate they are likely to implement learning from Education Scotland in practice/make changes to processes

To take forward the short-term external outcomes 2 and 3, a wide range of activities have been successfully completed during this reporting period. Education Scotland has been working to improve equality and diversity by increasing practitioner's knowledge, understanding, awareness and skills. This has predominantly been done by offering professional learning and leadership opportunities and developing resources and materials for education practitioners to use. The short-term impact of these activities is measured according to participants' self-reported confidence, awareness and knowledge and understanding, self-reported intended changes in practice as a result of the learning, qualitative evidence and the number of downloads and webpage views.

Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities (IWE) Professional Learning Framework

Education Scotland's new Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities (IWE) Professional Learning Framework ensures educators have equitable access to free, high quality and relevant professional learning, set within the inclusive Scottish context. This is a key component in understanding and supporting the needs of all children and young people. The Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework aims to support anyone working with, and supporting children and young people in an educational context, including early years, schools, Community Learning and Development (CLD), third sector and social work. The framework was developed in collaboration with all 32 local authorities and establishments in 2023. The first phase – Level 1 (the informed level) – was published in December 2023 and to date (March 2024) it has been accessed 5,667 times.

Using three levels (Informed, Skilled and Enhanced), the IWE Professional Learning Framework aims to:
- Simplify the professional learning landscape for inclusion, wellbeing and equalities.
- Support capacity building and a common understanding, language and skills for all educators
- Provide high quality, up to date opportunities which can be adapted to suit the local context. Local authorities will be able to incorporate the professional framework into their own professional learning programmes.
- Support individual educators to plan their own professional learning.
- Support the implementation of the Scottish Government drivers and action plans. For example, the Additional Support for Learning Action Plan.

The Framework includes a range of professional learning resources and activities related to four interconnected and interdependent themes, which includes diversity, the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics as well as non-protected characteristics linked to wider inequalities:
- Inclusion
- Rights and Equalities

- Relationships
- Wellbeing and Care.

All four themes, and particularly the Rights and Equalities theme, are relevant to equality, diversity and related issues. Engagement feedback from a Regional Improvement Collaborative Inclusion Lead Officer meeting with 5 local authorities was positive, with the following feedback shared:

> "I think the 4 themes are very helpful and the framework will support our professional learning programme and support a consistency of approach within and across local authorities."

Many of the IWE Professional Learning Framework resources were developed by adapting existing successful professional learning offers. For example, the Relationships professional learning resources were based on feedback from the "Relational and Restorative Approaches – Extending out Thinking" professional learning programme which was experienced by approximately 1,500 practitioners across all sectors and ages.

Engagement with educators and leaders is ongoing to promote, evaluate and identify gaps in the framework and its professional learning activities. A series of sessions with Community Learning and Development practitioners focusing on the Rights and Equalities theme received very positive feedback. After the sessions participants recorded increases in their:
- Knowledge between 70 -100%
- Skills between 50-100%
- Awareness & understanding between 80-100%

Moreover, 80% said they were likely to implement the learning and 90% said they would share the learning.

Feedback from webinars which introduced the new Equalities professional learning resources entitled "Bias and Inequality" and "Impact of Inequality" indicated that practitioners found the discussions, the voices of children and young people (in the format of an animation using children's experiences and voices) and Allport's Scale the most valuable. Participants shared their experiences of the professional learning resources:

> "Session was informative, and engaging. The resources signposted are great, and will be very useful."

> "Having worked in equality and diversity for almost 30 years, it is great when you come across resources that provoke thoughts and makes you look at a number of issues in a new light. I also found the resources useful for future presentations I will be doing."

Participants suggested that more case studies and practice examples could be used for the development of future resources.

A webinar on the new Relationships professional learning resources entitled "Co-Regulation and De-Escalation" was developed based on feedback from participants in previous professional learning sessions. The positive feedback and high demand for the webinar (603 signed up) indicates the need for more sessions in the future. 237 evaluation responses were received with an average increase in knowledge and understanding from 3.14 to 4.19 and an average increase in confidence from 2.98 to 4.17. Several comments highlighted participants' perceptions of the high quality of the professional learning resources:

"I will be able to support colleagues to understand more fully these themes and how to implement in class."

"I now have validated strategies that I can use with young people in my classroom and have a better understanding of how to identify their function/need based on what behaviours are presenting."

"Another great training. We had a variety of experiences and hopefully it will allow us to have a collegiate thinking and agreement in support for our little people."

"Really good visuals to share with staff to help develop their understanding and signpost to further CLPL resources"

"It'd made me really think that it's okay to just take a breath and give myself a bit of breathing space before dealing with conflict as sometimes as teachers that's what is needed rather than reacting straight away."

"Whilst I had a few strategies that I already use, it's been great to gain a few more that will help across different situations. I intend to share the slides with my colleagues within my own faculty."

Many of the above comments also point at the professional learning resources' potential to build participants' capacity and that of their colleagues. They also illustrate how the resources can alter and improve practice.

An online evaluation form focused on the accessibility of the IWE Professional Learning Framework resources also generated a lot of positive general feedback from people who have started using the professional learning resources in their own settings.. For example, practitioners using the Relationships and Behaviour professional learning resources shared the following comments:

"Thought this was a very useful, informed and helpful resource for own learning and leading learning with staff. Excellent resource."

"The learning opportunity was pitched at me as a class teacher. It was easy to follow and broken down into segments with exemplars to promote reflection and deeper understanding."

The framework will continue to develop and evolve through collaboration and consultation with educators and local authorities. During 2024 - 2025, the Education Scotland Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities team will focus on the development of professional learning resources for the Skilled and Enhanced levels.

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a peer education leadership programme for secondary schools which explores and challenges the attitudes underpinning gender inequality and gender-based violence. This work supports the development of safe learning environments for all and can help to challenge gender inequality. Gender inequality is understood to be both the cause and consequence of violence against women and girls; this violence is a human rights issue.

MVP contributes to the prevention aspect of Equally Safe, the Scottish Government's strategy to eradicate violence against woman and girls by raising awareness of gender based violence, challenging gender stereotypes and norms and addressing safe and healthy relationships and consent. During practitioner professional learning, the intersectional nature of gender-based violence is explored and awareness is raised of the disproportional impact on those with certain protected characteristics.

Professional learning surveys are conducted with participants who attend one- or two-day MVP professional learning. One day of capacity-building professional learning focuses on the 5 core components of MVP and is for schools looking to add to their team of MVP support staff. The two-day course also covers practice delivery and school implementation planning and is aimed at schools new to the programme. Both professional learning offers explore the gendered nature of violence, leadership, the bystander approach, the scope of violence and victim blaming in the media.

Between April 2023 and February 2024, a total of 24 professional learning events were held. Of these, 23 were one- or two-day PL for new practitioners with a total of 478 attendees. One of the events was a Train the Trainer course for experienced MVP practitioners, which was attended by 13 practitioners. The 468 pre- and post-responses made to the professional learning survey amounts to a 98% response rate. The following trends emerged from the survey responses:

- Increase in knowledge related to integrating gender-based violence into their work.

the professional learning event, 37% stated they agree or strongly agree they had a good idea of how to do this, and 97.7% after attending the professional learning event.

- Increase in skills to educate others about gender-based violence.

Before the professional learning event, 34.6% of participants agree or strongly agree they had the skills to educate others about gender-based violence. After the professional learning event, this had risen to 97%.

- Participants shifted significantly in how strongly they agreed that there are several ways to be an active bystander when challenging abusive behaviour.

25.3% strongly agreed before the professional learning event and 75.9% strongly agreed after. The majority of these shifted from previously being 'neutral' or 'agree' to 'strongly agree', revealing a positive shift in confidence around their knowledge.

Participant comments after attending a MVP professional learning event:

"I found the entire course incredibly informative and worthwhile. My main takeaway would be the story behind the bystander and the many ways they can become active, without risking their own safety. I feel confident in sharing this information with others." (Edinburgh participant)

"The resources are incredibly useful. Learning about the power of a bystander. Changed perception on what a bystander can do. Improved my own knowledge and feel more confident in up-skilling students to deliver course content." (Highland participant)

"I really liked the structured sessions plans. They have given me confidence in approaching difficult subject matter." (Aberdeenshire participant)

"The practical activities made me very aware of my own unconscious bias and given me the tools to address this personally in the classroom." (Fife participant)

A short survey was launched in April 2023 over a two-week period to try to capture some of the impact of delivering the MVP programme. One response from each school was requested; 76 responded (44% of all schools that were delivering MVP at this time). Respondents were asked to share an example where the MVP programme had a particular impact on a mentor:

> "One mentor stated they were far more confident in approaching situations where they felt uneasy about actions of others and felt they had strategies in place to vocalise this more effectively." Dumfries and Galloway Council

> "The relationship between a mentor and a mentee allowed them both to explore their own trauma around gender-based violence and feel connected to a wider community that had similar experiences." Aberdeenshire Council

> "We have a non-binary pupil who uses this platform to encourage pupils to respect each other. They are thriving in delivering sessions and feels they are in a safer environment in school." Glasgow City Council

> "A number of mentors have come to report concerns to me over behaviours they have witnessed in the passing in corridors. One mentor felt confident enough to challenge a pupils language use in the corridors after they said 'that's gay' about something a fellow pupil had said." West Lothian Council

> "I have noticed that the mentors in particular are less tolerant of their peers inappropriate jokes that could be sexist etc. They do hold each other to account and by have a common language with which to use it has helped them feel empowered enough to say something when peer behaviour is unacceptable." Dumfries and Galloway

The qualitative evidence above exemplifies the powerful impact of the MVP programme on education practitioners and on young people who increasingly become aware of gender-based violence, gender stereotypes and unhealthy relationships, and who actively take steps to address these. The intersectional benefits of the programme are also clear in its alignment with LGBT inclusive education as illustrated in the example of a young non-binary person feeling empowered by the programme.

Leading Gender Equality in Education

Although the Leading Gender Equality in Education professional learning programme was delivered from 2022 – 2023 using the Improving Gender Balance and Equalities Self-Evaluation Framework, final evaluation responses were gathered in April 2023. 33 participants started the course but there was significant drop off over the course of the year, and practitioners reported struggling for time to engage fully. As such, we tried to be flexible with sessions and deadlines, however we wondered if providing too much flexibility meant that some practitioners dropped off/lost interest.

- 77.8% reported an increase in confidence around carrying out professional enquiry relating to gender equality in their setting.
- 88.9% agreed or strongly agreed that they could identify ways to implement improvement approaches in relation to gender equality in practice, however, only 44.4% agreed with the statement 'I gather evidence and evaluate the impact of gender equality on the learning, successes and achievements of learners in my setting'. 44.4% were neutral on this statement.

- 66.6% reported feeling confident to use the Improving Gender Balance and Equalities Self-Evaluation Framework to support long-term interventions in this area. 22.2% were neutral and 11.1% did not feel confident.
- 100% reported being able to engage in professional dialogue and share practice with colleagues relating to gender equality.

The challenges practitioners reported included finding the time and getting buy in from senior management. Some participants shared their experiences of the programme and their next steps:

> "I have gained a deeper self-awareness of my own practice and do feel more confident in raising issues and leading discussion with colleagues. The session on unconscious bias was particularly helpful and I think could be a useful focus/starting point when broaching changes with reluctant colleagues."

> "I have gained a stronger understanding of how to effectively identify, address, and improve gender inequality within the classroom setting. I feel more confident in my knowledge and training which will enable me to engage in professional dialogue with my colleagues and members of senior leadership. I will share what I have learned in my Equally Safe At School working group at school and implement gender-inclusive practice in my setting."

During this reporting period, an Improving Gender Balance and Equalities Toolkit was developed for Community Learning and Development (CLD) which has had 411 views. Education Scotland's CLD team worked with the Equalities team to develop and publish the toolkit which includes a Wakelet and resources for practitioners and leaders to use to improve practice and apply challenge questions. The toolkit contains resource templates and case studies from pilot areas. A launch event and several online professional learning sessions (including during the regional Winter Festivals) have generated positive feedback, including increased knowledge and understanding.

Children's Rights, Human Rights and Effective Learner Participation

Training and networks have been established to ensure that practitioners at all levels and all sectors are able to develop and deepen their understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and effective Learner Participation. It is an ongoing piece of work that is essential, particularly now that the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act is to commence on 16th July 2024. Once this new Act passes, it will not only be a moral imperative, but a legal one to protect, respect and fulfil the rights of all children in Scotland (up to 18 years of age).

There is also an increasing need to ensure that partner organisations are aware of Scotland's Human Rights Bill which is currently being finalised and also aspects of the UNCRC Act, such as child friendly complaints mechanisms.

There is a necessity to support educationalists to understand how the UNCRC underpins many other core principles of education including, but not limited to:
- curriculum development
- learning, teaching and assessment
- school improvement
- interdisciplinary learning

- developing the young workforce
- inclusion and equalities
- learning for sustainability.

To support these principles, it is essential that learners are able to share their views in a meaningful way which requires effective Learner Participation across settings. This is very closely linked to Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Education Scotland's Community Learning and Development (CLD) team actively update and promote a UNCRC, Children's Rights & CLD Wakelet to the sector https://wakelet.com/wake/ibNbgxZCon4mXI_KTOabu (675 views for this reporting period). CLD Officers plan and deliver regular UNCRC professional learning in partnership with YouthLink Scotland. This professional learning is targeted at Youth Workers in all sectors and involves:

- Level 1: Introduction to UNCRC (77 participants across 3 sessions)
- Level 2. Rights based practice

There have been 77 participants across 3 dates (June - Nov 23) with 52 evaluations indicated increased knowledge and skills and increased confidence.

Training and networks have included external and internal colleagues who work in Early Years settings, Community Learning, Primary, Secondary, post-16 and Gaelic Medium. There has also been training provided for Elected Members and Local Authority Leads. Parents have also been offered opportunities to engage in awareness-raising sessions. 16 people who have been engaging in these various opportunities with Education Scotland, through professional learning, advice, support and professional dialogue have completed evaluations for this reporting period, with an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. These include local authority officers, ASN principal teachers, headteachers, third sector partners and parental engagement officers. As a result of engagements, the following positive impacts were identified:

- an officer subsequently built a core group of informed practitioners who are supporting learner leadership.
- one organisation improved the quality of the professional learning offer they provide
- several local authority officers were more confident, had an increased knowledge of their UNCRC remit and felt empowered to support other colleagues.
- practitioners were able to provide opportunities for children and young people to take a meaningful role in school improvement planning
- many had access to up to date information, resources and networks of support

These networks are proving to be a valuable source of information, support and professional leadership and development. Members shared further impact of the engagements in the evaluation forms:

"Working with [Education Scotland's Senior Education Officer] has been invaluable in terms of knowledge and understanding of UNCRC. Bringing this expertise alongside her own professional experience as an educator has brought a level of authenticity and legitimacy to her role and our work together. This work would be much harder without having Education Scotland play this role. More widely we feel supported by Education Scotland in the promotion of our work to amplify the voices of children across Scotland. We put considerable effort in to ensuring children of different backgrounds, abilities and geographical locations are represented in our work and Education Scotland helps ensure children's messages reaches people and places beyond our organisation's reach."

"This has clarified what we can bring to teachers and local authorities to complement what is already on offer, through ES, but also through wider partners. It's wonderful to ensure our messages are consistent for teacher, and that we are avoiding replication."

"Alongside my colleagues, I have been able to confidently train and support settings to implement UNCRC within their schools and settings. Professional dialogues between staff in different settings, who do not normally get to collaborate, has been extremely beneficial and has allowed for more networking within the authority to take place."

"Young people taking part in the Young People's Strategic Panel were supported through a co-design project in order to deliver a final report with recommendations for how Education Scotland could improve its engagement with young people. This report was completed in August 2022 and the young were given the opportunity to present it to senior leaders in September. The panel are due to attend a Connect with Colleagues meeting in November to further feedback on their recommendations from this report. ES staff were involved throughout the project's process, collaborating with the Panel through mentoring, knowledge building and helping the young people to refine their recommendations. We hope to see Education Scotland taking on these recommendations for implementation in the future."

The above qualitative evidence reveals the impacts of the collaborative efforts between Education Scotland and various educational stakeholders which highlights the critical role of Education Scotland in supporting the integration of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scottish education. Through these various partnerships, educational initiatives are successfully amplifying children's perspectives across Scotland, ensuring the practical incorporation of children and young people's perspectives in educational policy and engagement strategies. Additionally, professional development and networking opportunities have been enhanced, fostering the implementation of UNCRC principles in educational settings and promoting consistent messaging for educators.

Supporting Young Carers in Education

Education Scotland developed 3 Professional Learning Activities on Supporting Young Carers in Education, available here. The course was launched with national awareness raising event and it is broken down into three modules:

- Module 1 - For any practitioner (178 practitioners have completed the online course and 47 are still working on it)
- Module 2 - For middle leaders such as Guidance or Pastoral Care Staff (51 middle leaders have completed the course and 16 are still working on it)
- Module 3 - For School Leaders with responsibility for Young carers (3 - 47 Young Carer School Leaders have completed the course and 8 are still working on it).

The course have been designed to help practitioners identify young carers, put appropriate supports in pace for individual young carers and fulfil statutory duties, and how to raise awareness and enhance support at a school level.

Keeping the Promise: Care Experienced Children and Young People

The Keeping the Promise Award Programme (Keeping the Promise Award Programme) was co-developed with Promise Leads from the West Partnership. The resources have yet to be officially launched (March 2024), however, many settings and local authorities have already become early adopters, shown by the 2803 views since publication in October 2023. The programme was designed as baseline professional learning, for anyone working with children and young people, particularly those who are care experienced. It aims to raise awareness of The Promise, understanding children and young people's needs, and how best to support them. The programme is designed to be delivered as in-service training by a school/setting practitioner rather than by Education Scotland staff. The Programme has 3 levels of Award, one for individual participation, one for whole school participation, and one when the school can demonstrate the professional learning has had an impact on children and young people. The Award is tied into a national measures framework Education Scotland has developed with the Scottish Government and COSLA: The Promise in Education Framework.

Train the Trainer sessions explain the programme and take potential trainers through the resources. Different local authorities are planning to deliver the training in different ways depending on local authority size and resource. The ultimate goal is ensure the training has happened in every educational setting in Scotland. The programme was originally intended to be launched in Feb 2024 with a series of awareness raising events with key leading organisations running from June 2023-2024 to ensure maximum engagement. However, demand was so great in advance of the academic year that we published the resources early and delivered the Train the Trainer sessions on demand.

As a result, Clackmannanshire have already delivered the full training to all their schools and they estimate that over 500 people experienced the Keeping the Promise Award Session 1 as in-service training so far. A number of individual schools have decided to become early adopters and deliver the training in their settings before their local authority has officially launched the programme. South Ayrshire, Argyll and Bute, Inverclyde, and a number of other local authorities have chosen to train central staff to either directly deliver the programme or run train the trainer sessions. Some are even considering creating "Promise Champions" in their local authority.

The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative have experienced over 4 Train the Trainer sessions of the Keeping the Promise Award, with 130 in attendance. Evaluation responses indicated an increased understanding as a result of the professional learning (average 8.3/10). Participants appreciated how informative the resources are and how they will support their own delivery of the programme.

While the programme is very much at its early stages, there is no doubt of the impact it is having on educators and leaders who are more aware and supported. In fact, the first school to receive the "We Promise" award, Benart Primary School in Fife, created a care experienced support group. Feedback from a child in this group indicates the powerful impact of the programme: "The group makes me feel more comfortable because I don't live with my mum or dad".

Positive Relationships and Behaviour

A wide range of professional learning offers, materials and resources have been produced and delivered on restorative approaches to promote positive relationships and behaviour. Some of these are explored in the next two sections and some of the professional learning resources now sit on the Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework, under the Relationships theme. The initial impact of those resources is covered at the beginning of this section.

A Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour webpage and resource was developed at the request of the Scottish Advisory Group for Relationships and Behaviour to provide system level support: Promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings. Since April 2023, there have been:
- 2890 views of webpage since last April
- 305 downloads of the resource from the webpage
- 63 downloads of the Relationships and Behaviour Policy Guidance
- 165 downloads of the supporting resources on the webpage

National Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Network

A new National Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Network was formed at the request of a number of headteachers working in Special schools. The network has representation from 29 local authorities and it is formed of a steering group with an in-person being planned. The network aims to provide a safe space for Specialist settings supporting children and young people with SEBN. Members support each other by sharing their practice and experiences, with strong demand for further events.

So far, 17 evaluation responses have been received with an average 4.8 out of 5 overall rating for the quality of the professional learning, 4.4 average likelihood of implementation and 4.8 out of 5 likelihood of sharing. Members have found the network to be a valuable space for networking and gaining information on how different local authorities organise and support children with SEBN. Members found the professional learning offered during network sessions to be particularly useful in creating a shared understanding. One member highlighted the personal and professional impact of the network:

> "As this was a network of SEB ASN schools, I was able to create links with other headteachers who are leading and managing similar establishments. This area of education can often be quite isolated and so being able to talk about the specific issues related to SEB was very helpful."

Relational and Restorative Approaches – Extending out Thinking

This in-service training was developed after feedback from the last full Restorative Approaches Train the Trainer course delivered to a central team of 20 in Stirling Council. The feedback suggested that regular practitioners found the training hard to implement as they didn't have the basics that underpin restorative approaches and didn't know how the skills developed with Restorative Approaches training fitted with other approaches such as Nurture, Children's Rights,

etc. The professional learning was originally developed and piloted in two Scottish Borders Schools (one secondary, and one 3-18). Based on feedback, the professional learning has evolved and been adapted for a range of settings. At the training, we provide signposting to the Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework resources as potential next steps in learning. However, almost all schools have requested further support around developing or refreshing their Relationships and Behaviour policy.

During this reporting period, these half-day in-service training sessions were offered to:
- 13 secondary schools across Perth and Kinross, Dundee, Scottish Borders, Moray, and Edinburgh
- 4 Primary Schools in Edinburgh City Council
- 1 3-18 school in Scottish Borders
- 1 Special School in Dundee
- 100 Campus Cops

Most schools carried out their own evaluation of a complete day of in-service training, however, 72 evaluations were gathered through Education Scotland's regional evaluation form from a range of settings. Those evaluation results indicate:
- An average overall rating for the quality of the professional learning was 4.2 out of 5
- Likelihood of implementation was 4 out of 5
- Likelihood of sharing was 3.9 out of 5.

School leaders found the sessions particularly beneficial to rewrite and improve school relationship policies to support staff with strategies to apply. Classroom teachers found they had a better understanding of restorative approaches, considered how to reframe the language they used and knew the positive impact of restorative conversations.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

In relation to equalities and diversity, we have had a specific overarching focus on wellbeing of both staff and children and young people. This approach is demonstrated in the work completed on the Cycle of Wellbeing which draws together a range of recently published resources to support staff wellbeing and the wellbeing of children and young people. In so doing, participants can more easily access materials and resources to support their own wellbeing and to enhance practitioners' ability to support children and young people's wellbeing. The genesis of the work can be found in the Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) and Schools: personal and social education review - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Over the period of this report, we have delivered professional learning on the Cycle of Wellbeing as part of Education Scotland's Excellence in Headship. Professional learning was also offered in North Lanarkshire (100% attendees reported increased awareness, with 47 headteachers and depute headteachers from across primary and secondary schools).

Keeping Trauma in Mind

Trauma can disproportionately affect people with certain protected characteristics and work in this area can support trauma-informed approaches to equality and diversity. Keeping Trauma in Mind (KTiM) is a professional learning offer developed by Education Scotland. The intended

audience are adults working in or with schools and settings supporting children and young people across Scotland. The programme is aimed at an 'informed' and 'skilled' level based on the NES levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. The KTiM programme includes a more practical approach, providing practitioners with examples of what a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive approach looks like in practice. Delivery of the programme takes place on Microsoft Teams over four twilight sessions as follows:

> Session 1 – Trauma : prevalence impact & signs (379 attendees)
> Session 2 – Responding to trauma (349 attendees)
> Session 3 – Self Regulation (304 attendees)
> Session 4 – Traumatic bereavement (288 attendees)

Although there is drop off from original sign up, the percentage drop off is significantly lower than other professional learning delivered over this year. Overall rating of the sessions was 4.54 out of 5, with a significant increase in participants' knowledge, confidence and skills after the sessions.

Several bespoke sessions of Keeping Trauma in Mind were also delivered in partnership with local authorities:

- Stirling headteachers, making connections between nurture and trauma (26 attendees)
- East Renfrewshire Council Pupil Support staff, with a focus on unaccompanied asylum seekers
- North Lanarkshire Council, full KTiM programme with 4 virtual twilight sessions (219 evaluation responses indicate increase in knowledge, confidence and skills with an overall average rating of 4.6 out of 5 for the sessions)
- East Renfrewshire Council KTiM with 2 in-person sessions
- West Partnership KTiM Collaborative Action Research project

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding and child protection are especially important for marginalised groups of children and young people, including those with protected characteristics, those who are care experienced and those who are affected by socio-economic barriers. The new national guidance for Child Protection was published in September 2021 and updated in August 2023: Supporting documents - National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

The publication of the guidance led to the development of a national safeguarding in education network, bringing together child protection and safeguarding in education strategic leads from across the 32 local authorities and the independent sector. Representation is also included from Scottish Government Child Protection, Learning Directorate. Terms of reference were agreed, dates set for quarterly meetings and a questionnaire established the key themes, issues and priorities arising relating to this area. Virtual sessions always include time for networking as this is reported as being one of the most valuable aspects of the sessions. Since April 2023, four meetings were held exploring the following themes:

- MHI update / Prevent update / Short life working group supervision update / misogyny resources
- streamlining local Child Protection policy / RSHP / Online safety Bill
- Missing from education / Violence prevention framework / Neglect / consistency in chronologies

- Mandatory training / suicide prevention / Education Scotland's new Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning framework

Education Scotland actively promotes the welfare and wellbeing of its employees and of all children, young people and adults whom Education Scotland staff come in contact with during any form of engagement across Scottish schools and educational establishments. As such, Education Scotland has corporate parenting responsibilities and, as an organisation, we are committed to ensuring:

- children's and young people's rights to care and protection from harm in any form are firmly upheld as outlined within United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- adult learners' personal interests, dignity and care, and protection from harm are safeguarded;
- we fulfil our legislative duties related to safeguarding, including child protection
- the interests of all Education Scotland staff are safeguarded as they go about their work and engage with learners of all ages; and
- all staff within Education Scotland, including Corporate Services personnel, are suitably trained in how to respond to safeguarding matters.

See Education Scotland's Corporate Parenting Plan and Education Scotland's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Disability and Additional Support Needs (ASN)

The next four sections outline the range of activities, resources and professional learning opportunities provided during this reporting period, with a strong focus on improving inclusive practice for all learners, including those who require additional support. Understanding learner's entitlements and effective pedagogical approaches for inclusive practice includes a knowledge of the Scottish context, accessibility, differentiation, the interconnected four factors that give rise to additional support needs and the broad definition of additional support needs. This includes disability, specific learning differences, care-experience, poverty, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and many others. The Education Scotland Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities (IWE) team provide a range of ways educators can access professional learning. This includes the new Education Scotland Inclusion Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework, online modules, professional learning activities, webinars, in person events, attendance at events, information and guidance on the National Improvement Hub, Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit and the Autism Toolbox (35,000 users have accessed these this reporting period). These are free resources that provide information for teachers, schools and local authorities on inclusive practice, literacy difficulties, dyslexia and autism.

An example of the professional learning offered includes the session entitled "Seeing Me, Seeing You: Resources to Explore Disability Positively in Primary Schools." Education Scotland facilitated this professional learning session in partnership with Queen Margaret University to showcase curricular materials to improve disability representation and reduce bias in the classroom. The session was evaluated very positively using a professional survey and a Mentimeter poll at the beginning and at the end of the session:

- confidence levels around teaching about disabilities increased from 5.1 - 7.1.
- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that their confidence around the subject area had increased.

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that they felt more knowledgeable.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that their skills around the topic had improved.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that their awareness and understanding had improved.

Evaluation responses identified the most valuable aspect of the session:

"The resources, the simple ideas about ensuring all children have more opportunities to talk about disability and engage with resources - imaginative play and toys. Lots of ways to make this a more accessible topic in schools."

Additional Support for Learning Action Plan

Education Scotland chairs Subgroup 2 of the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Project Board. The subgroup focuses on the collation and development of information, guidance and professional learning on this area. During this reporting session there have been 6 Project board meetings and 4 subgroup meetings. As part of the ASL Action Plan, the 23,435 Badges have been awarded across the suite of eight free Open University online modules and 14 Professional learning activities are available covering a range of areas for inclusion and ASN.

Led by Education Scotland and facilitated by Dyslexia Scotland, the GTCS Professional Recognition Programme for Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice runs over an academic year. Due to the very high quality of applications numbers were increased from 35 in 2022/23 to 72 in 2023/34 to ensure all applications that met the entry criteria gained a place. This programme is central to an evolving community of practice in dyslexia and inclusive practice across Scotland. In 2023, 25 teachers achieved Professional Recognition on this programme.

The CIRCLE Framework for Inclusive Practice was developed by Edinburgh City Council, Queen Margaret University and NHS Lothian to promote effective inclusive practice in classrooms. The Secondary CIRCLE Framework materials have been adapted by Education Scotland and this professional learning continues to be delivered. During this reporting period, the following evaluations have been recorded:
- Total ELC evaluations 100% return, with 89% showing improvement.
- Total primary evaluations 100% return, with 91-97% showing improvement.
- Total secondary evaluations 67% return, with 95-100% showing improvement.

Education Scotland has also offered professional learning on ADHD which was attended by 310 participants. Of the 189 returns, 83% showed improvement.

Autism and Inclusive Practice

A new programme for middle leaders on Autism and Inclusive Practice was been developed with the Professional Learning and Leadership Team at Education Scotland. The programme aims to support the development of knowledge and understanding of autism and inclusion, but also development of skills and abilities as a leader of good practice. Initial interest has been high with 44 participants across 11 local authorities comprising of Principal Teachers, Depute Headteachers, Headteachers and aspiring leaders with representation across Early Learning and Childcare, Primary, Secondary and specialist provisions.

Participants appreciated the high quality resources of the programme and the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from various sectors. The participants have become champions in their school and local authority, thereby spreading the knowledge more widely. In this video, programme participants from a variety of roles talk about their experience of the programme, leading group learning sessions in their own settings using the group learning materials. They also reflect on their own next steps for professional learning and development, as well as supporting their colleagues in their own next steps.

National Complex Needs Networks

Education Scotland leads and facilitates 3 national networks which provide opportunities to share practice, offer support, connect with others across the country to reduce professional isolation, receive national updates and access to specialist professional development opportunities:

- **National SCERTS Practitioner network**

This network includes 210 practitioners across 29 local authorities. During this reporting period, 5 virtual network meetings have been held.

- **National Complex Needs Network (NCNN) - Practitioner**

This network was established in November 2023. It currently includes 284 members across 30 local authorities and the independent sector. Education Scotland's Curriculum Innovation team supported 5 Curriculum Design sessions focused on "Scotland's Curriculum: Where are we now? Where are we going? What matters?" 107 members signed up to the 5 sessions and a total of 77 members were in attendance.

- **National Complex Needs Network (NCNN) - Strategic**

This network includes 94 members across 32 local authorities, with representation from the independent sector. Members have had 5 core meetings and through 5 subgroups there has been 15 subgroup meetings. 2 more subgroups have been established in April 2024. In June 2023, 80 – 100% positive responses (agree or strongly agree) were received for the following statements:
  - o I have found the network meetings informative
  - o I have made (or have the ability to make new connections) across different LAs
  - o I feel the NCNN is a safe space to discuss the relevant issues for this sector
  - o Participation in this network has supported my role
  - o I feel more connected as a result of this network
  - o I would like the network to continue

Verbal feedback from network members highlights the importance of these networks:

'Great support, as the only specials school in the authority it can be very lonely, especially when seeking out guidance about specifics related to our complex learners. Through the network I feel supported, I know I have a network that I can ask questions, I feel that it has been a positive for a area that can often be an afterthought.'

'I think all the current developments in supporting the severe and complex needs sector are absolutely what we need and am excited in joining the network!'

'Looking forward to hopefully making some headway on what curriculum and achievement looks like for individuals'

Accessibility and Differentiation: Print Disability

All children and young people must be able to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge to the best of their ability. To do this meaningfully, effectively and equitably, learning and teaching resources need to be accessible.

Print disability
- This represents a person (child or adult) who cannot effectively read print because of a visual, physical, perceptual, developmental, cognitive, or learning disability. This includes those who:
- Are blind or partially sighted
- Have a physical disability e.g. They experience difficulties turning a page or holding a book/magazine etc
- Have significant processing difficulties which can include Autism, intellectual disabilities and Specific Learning Differences e.g. Dyslexia.

To do this, educators need to be aware of:
- Understanding of the legal entitlements and requirement to ensure all learners can access the totality of the curriculum. This includes the additional copyright entitlement. .
- Understanding of the additional entitlement disabled leaners have to access the totality of the curriculum – Physical building, communication and curriculum.
- Practice on ensuring learning and teaching approaches and resources are accessible and are appropriately differentiated. Particularly those with a print disability.
- The key focus areas to create accessible textual resources.

During this reporting session, a range of professional learning and reflective discussions on accessibility and differentiation were led by Education Scotland. The aim was to share information and guidance and provide reflective opportunities for educators to share and shape practice in their settings. Furthermore, two new professional learning resources were developed and are available on the are included within the new Inclusion Wellbeing and Equalities (IWE) Professional Learning Framework. in the Inclusion section: "Accessibility – an introduction" and "Differentiation – an introduction." Since publication, a separate Curriculum and Accessibility Wakelet has been accessed 729 times.

In addition, four reflective sessions with secondary school middle leaders (Faculty leads and heads of departments) were held in 2 schools. The sessions provided an opportunity for professional development and explored a range of challenging areas experienced within and across specific subject areas.

Feedback
Middle leaders provided verbal feedback on the positive impact achieved on both the pupils and staff following adaptations made to improve visual layout out of generic faculty lesson starter resources:

> "Pupils are notably more settled at the start of a lesson since we adapted our learning and teaching starter to be more accessible." (Faculty head)

The school is developing a suite of accessible films which demonstrate practical tasks and techniques for their pupils to use in design technology and music. These will be available nationally to increase awareness and share practice. One of the secondary schools established

a staff collegiate group focusing on differentiation and will share their progress and practice at their school learning festival in May 2024.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Inclusive Education

Education Scotland contributes to the Scottish Government's LGBT Inclusive Education Implementation Group. We have been working in partnership with Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) to promote LGBT Inclusive education. Education Scotland's webpages link directly to the National Platform for LGBT inclusive education (https://lgbteducation.scot/) with curricular resources and professional learning, which TIE manage and oversee.

Moreover, Education Scotland's new Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework has professional learning resources which link to the National Platform for LGBT Inclusive Education and strengthen its curriculum design principles. For example, the professional learning resource on "Diversity in the Curriculum: Mirrors and Windows" promotes a practical approach for more inclusive curriculum design, coined by Dr Rudine Sims Bishop. The resource was review by TIE and the approach is currently promoted on the professional learning available on the National Platform for LGBT inclusive education.

In March 2024, a webinar introducing the "Mirrors and Windows" professional learning resource was attended by over 60 educators and leaders from across secondary, primary, ELC, CLD and the third sector. While only 7 attendees completed the evaluation form, out of these, all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their knowledge and awareness had increased, rating the session good or very good, and indicating that they would be likely or very likely to implement and share their learning. One respondent shared their appreciation of the intersectional approach:

> "I use mirrors and windows in my work every day but I really enjoyed seeing mirrors and windows used intersectionally, I have started to give examples from different protected characteristics when delivering workshops so it was reassuring to see EdScot put that down as good practice. The distorted mirrors and windows section gave me a lot of think about. I also liked the addition of neurodiversity and socioeconomics to the diversity wheel."

In partnership with TIE and a range of other stakeholders, Education Scotland has also been facilitating an exploratory cross-curricular review for Social Justice, Rights and Equalities, with emerging Big Ideas influenced by the curriculum themes available on the National Platform for LGBT inclusive education. We do not have evaluative data for much of the work in this area so far because it is at its early developmental stages or owned by other agencies, such as TIE. In moving forward, we will need to consider if it is possible to evaluate our specific contribution in the short term.

Anti-Racism in Education Programme (AREP)

Education Scotland plays an important role in the Scottish Government's Anti-Racism in Education Programme (AREP). Education Scotland is represented on the Programme Board and the four related workstreams (Diversity in the Teaching Profession and Education Workforce; Racism and Racist Incidents; Curriculum Reform; Education Leadership and Professional Learning). Education Scotland co-chairs the Curriculum Reform workstream and manages the

Education Leadership and Professional Learning workstream, with its funding for the Building Racial Literacy professional learning programme. During this reporting period, there have been 8 Programme Board meetings, 26 subgroup meetings and 7 Workstream Leads meetings attended by more than one staff member from Education Scotland.

Education Scotland supported the AREP Curriculum Reform workstream in developing and promoting the Breaking the Mould Anti-Racist Curriculum Principles which were published in June 2023 (1291 views since September 2023). The principles have been designed to support learners, educators and leaders understand what an anti-racist curriculum can mean in practice, and Education Scotland has developed a Gaelic version of the principles. The title of the Anti-Racist Curriculum Principles, 'Breaking the Mould', was coined by a Black young person and Member of Scottish Youth Parliament who co-designed the principles with anti-racist educators and experts.

Education Scotland promotes the work of the Scottish Government's AREP with a Glow website (Promoting Anti-Racist Education in Scotland (glowscotland.org.uk)) which continues to be updated to reflect progress from different workstreams, such as the anti-racist curriculum principles.

Several staff members of Education Scotland have completed the Building Racial Literacy programme and have subsequently been taking steps to promote anti-racism in education through their roles. For example, Education Scotland's Community Learning and Development (CLD) team actively update and promote an Improving Racial Literacy in CLD Wakelet to the sector, published in June 2023: https://wakelet.com/wake/ma2JA6vbGIu1UMI5ujV9H (171 views since June 2023). CLD Officers also planned, developed and delivered introductory sessions on improving racial literacy in CLD. The professional learning is for CLD practitioners, managers in all sectors, youthwork, adult learning and community development. For two of these sessions, the 20 evaluations received indicated an increased knowledge and understanding.

During this reporting period, members of the Equalities and Curriculum Innovation teams at Education Scotland facilitated sessions on the anti-racist curriculum principles for:
- subject networks (Literacy and English)
- ADES Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications Network
- Stirling's Centre for Research into Curriculum Making
- a range of headteachers and leaders (Glasgow City Council, South Ayrshire, Angus, Renfrewshire, School Leaders Scotland, AHDS, Excellence in Headship Stretch, Into Headship, Clackmannanshire Curriculum Conference and Literacy Local Authority Leads).

Education Scotland also supported Glasgow City Council in adapting the anti-racist curriculum principles to develop an anti-racism charter. The anti-racist curriculum principles have also been embedded in the Building Racial Literacy programme.

As part of its work on the AREP Curriculum Reform subgroup, Education Scotland has been providing expert advice for the Development Education Centres in the co-creation of anti-racist curricular resources for Early Years and for Personal and Social Eucation / Health and Wellbeing, using the anti-racist curriculum principles. We have also supported the creation and sifting of the Children and Young People-led Anti-Racist Action Small Grants Fund which brings the anti-racist curriculum principles to life. Evidence of the impact of this small grants fund can be found in this case study: Anti-racism and racial literacy at Newark Primary School | Primary,

Anti-Racist Clubs Network and Learner Participation

Facilitated by Education Scotland, the Anti-Racist Clubs Network was set up in Spring 2022 as requested by participants on the anti-racist professional learning programme, Building Racial Literacy. Since the Building Racial Literacy programme highlights the importance of creating safer, braver spaces for children and young people to discuss their experiences of racism, many Building Racial Literacy participants had plans to set up anti-racist clubs at the time. Now, the network has more than 100 members across Scotland and it is an online space for support and inspiration for any teacher and practitioner currently running an anti-racist club, or thinking of setting one up. At monthly meetings on Microsoft Teams, members meet online to discuss challenges, share ideas and explore the different purposes of anti-racist clubs: from supporting children and young people who experience racist incidents, to promoting allyship and enabling young people's anti-racist leadership and co-design of an anti-racist curriculum. Many of the resources and ideas shared on the network are collated on this Padlet: Anti-Racist Clubs Network: Q&A / Resources (padlet.com)

A teacher who values the support network explained the impact of their anti-racist club at Drumchapel High School:

> "The importance of having this safe area cannot be overstated. They have gained trust in the school, after 11 months of running the Anti-Racism Society, one young person told me: "our school values us and acts on racial incidents." The room has changed significantly, and for me, the largest change is how much laughing and joy there is now. They are secure in themselves and have a strong feeling of belonging."
>
> (Safe spaces, inclusion, belonging and pupil empowerment | Professional Learning Blog | Professional Learning | Education Scotland)

The young Black person and former president of the Drumchapel Antiracism Society also stated:

> "The club has given us confidence, we are learning from each other about being anti-racist, we are more aware of other people's cultures, and we feel anti-racism is being taken seriously in our school. We are feeling safer, proud, happier, stronger and most importantly - heard."
>
> (Young Person's Perspective – Creating an inclusive and safe environment for everyone | Professional Learning Blog | Professional Learning | Education Scotland).

They outline the range of young-people led activities, from running their club's blog to organising anti-racist events and workshops for children in local primary schools. The young people in the Drumchapel Antiracism Society have spoken at Education Scotland webinars, including on the Building Racial Literacy programme as a panel member, and their inspiring presentation of all their achievements with the Scottish Learning Festival keynote speaker, Santiago Rincon-Gallardo, left the internationally-renowned academic moved to tears, stating that they were beautiful examples of the human spirit.

As a result of the Anti-Racist Clubs Network, many anti-racist clubs in secondary and primary schools are successfully supporting children and young people who experience racism and creating opportunities for them to thrive. Some anti-racist clubs have run workshops for other schools online and in person to learn about racism and how to challenge it, as well as training for their teachers on the importance of an anti-racist curriculum. Some clubs are actively co-designing an anti-racist curriculum with their teachers. Others have co-designed flowcharts outlining what teachers should do when a racist incident is identified. An anti-racist club in Orkney organised an music festival against racism.

The aforementioned small grants fund from the Scottish Government's Anti-Racism in Education Programme Curriculum Reform workstream is enabling a number of the above anti-racist club activities, and, notably, the creation of an animated video where Newark Primary School children shared, with their voice-overs and drawings, their experiences of racism and highlight the importance of anti-racist education for all. This video was screened in several local cinemas and has become a powerful learning resource for both pupils and teachers across Scotland.

Education Scotland Associates

As part of Education Scotland's commitment to increasing opportunities for practitioners to be actively engaged in the work of the agency, a pilot project has recently begun which aims to bring real-time experience to Education Scotland and provide additional support within the education system. Work was undertaken by Education Scotland to develop a model for this pilot, following internal consultation across the regional directorate. A decision was taken to focus on the recruitment of senior leaders from across the education system for this pilot with a focus on improvement.

The new role of Education Scotland Associate (ESA) has now been introduced in Education Scotland, drawing on the expertise of practitioners to contribute to educational policy, improvement and development, moving towards the aspiration of a teacher facing, profession led agency as recommended in Professor Ken Muir's report 'Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education'.

This pilot will allow Education Scotland to evaluate the benefits the new role of associate can bring to the system as well as to the agency. The pilot will be carefully evaluated and recommendations made for this proposed role within the refocussed agency.

This role will allow the practitioners to gain a national perspective of education, developing their system leadership as well as benefitting from additional high-quality professional learning in this area.

Two ESAs have been working on equalities projects, one of which is supporting the implementation, evaluation and ongoing development of the Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework. While the pilot is ongoing, so far, ESA felt that their participation in the pilot programme would have positive impacts for them going forward. In particular most of the ESAs commented on the different ideas and approaches they had learned, and how they would be able to use these in their substantive roles/in their own settings.

4. Leaders across all professional levels are increasingly cognisant of the barriers to promoted posts for certain equalities groups and proactively work to break down these barriers

Strategic Support for Anti-Racist Education for Leaders

Building on the work to promote the Breaking the Mould Anti-Racist Curriculum Principles, Education Scotland facilitated a session in October, followed by a full development day in

February on anti-racist education, for a one third of Scottish local authorities to network and share ideas. The sessions included:

- showcases of local and regional developments
- partnership working on curriculum and professional learning
- presentation on recruitment, retention and progression for Black and Minority Ethnic teachers by the GTCS
- improvement planning workshop.

Attendees in February identified actions for them to take as a result of the development day:

"Support schools to embed anti-racism, especially through improvement planning"

"Speak with my Head of Service re developing diversity within the workforce and reporting racist incidents. I have some good starting points in terms of materials, plans and case studies I can draw from to help convey what is happening with this work."

In addition to local authority support, Education Scotland has contributed to the Anti-Racism in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Network facilitated by the GTCS and the Scottish Council for Deans of Education. We shared our learning from the delivery of the anti-racist professional learning programme, Building Racial Literacy, which is supporting ITE institutions in taking forward the National Anti-Racism Framework for Initial Teacher Education published in June 2023: Launch of new National Anti-Racism Framework for Initial Teacher Education | News | Education Scotland. Members of Education Scotland contributed to the development of the framework as Critical Friends. This framework and the Teaching in a Diverse Scotland reports identify racial literacy as a priority area for increasing the recruitment, retention and progression of Black and Minority Ethnic teachers.

Building Racial Literacy Programme

Funded by the Scottish Government's Anti-Racism in Education Programme and emerging from the Education Leadership and Professional Learning workstream, Building Racial Literacy (BRL) is an anti-racist professional learning programme delivered by Education Scotland. The BRL programme promotes anti-racism as a baseline professional value, and empowers educators to identify and apply anti-racist actions and processes into their everyday practice. The overarching aim of the BRL programme is to make every educator in Scotland racially literate, confident in leading anti-racist practices and effective at dealing with racism. BRL has been co-constructed with a broad range of education stakeholders and anti-racist organisations. To date, over 400 educators and education system leaders from across Scotland have taken part in BRL since 2022.

On the BRL programme, participants explore the reason behind the under-representation of Black and Minority Ethnic educators, especially in promoted posts, and they develop personalised anti-racist action plans to implement in their different settings. These demonstrate participants learning and the impact of the professional learning. They also have the potential to build capacity in others in the schools and settings in which they work. Participants leave the programme feeling more confident to talk about and deal with racism, eager to continue deepening their increased understanding of racism, inspired and motivated to commit to anti-racist action in their different settings, and supported by the programme and its newly formed learning networks.

BRL has been an inclusive and liberating experience for participants of a range of different identities and backgrounds. For some, the programme was personally and professionally

transformative, for example, helping them feel more comfortable in their identity as an educator of colour or an educator with dyslexia. For others, the programme directly impacted the children and young people in their care, with learners stating they felt safer as a result of participants' anti-racist action plans. Examples of participants testimonies can be found here:

- My experience of Building Racial Literacy: power, motivation, hope and positivity (education.gov.scot)
- Building Racial Literacy (education.gov.scot)
- Decolonising the Curriculum: Exploring Positive Narratives that Challenge Assumptions, Empower Learners and Inspire Unity (education.gov.scot)
- My Experience of the Building Racial Literacy Programme (thepartproject.co.uk)
- Teaching Scotland Issue 94 (readymag.com)

The collective have been commissioned to carry out an external evaluation of the BRL programme and this is expected to be published with recommendations for the programme later this year. These findings will help inform the future of the programme and its related activities.

Leading Effective Anti-Racist Professional Learning

To support Building Racial Literacy (BRL) programme alumni and enhance the programme's longer-term impact, this development day helps alumni build their confidence, skills and knowledge to plan and deliver anti-racist training effectively, outwith the BRL programme. Two sessions were run in June and August 2023 (total of 37 participants). Of the 15 evaluation form responses, 100% rated the sessions "very good" and 100% were likely or very likely to implement the learning. Several attendees went on to:

- lead sessions for in-service days and local learning festivals,
- share their learning at two further of our Alumni Showcases for BRL Cohort 4
- complete the collaborative development of professional learning resources (e.g. Forth Valley West Lothian Thinglink)

This cascading of anti-racist professional learning can help increase the racial literacy of educators across Scotland and support leaders' understanding of the institutional barriers faced by Black and Minority Ethnic educators.

Sponsoring the Scottish Association for Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE) Recognition and Appreciation Awards

The Scottish Association of Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE) is a national organisation led by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) education professionals and Education Scotland has been a sponsor for SAMEE's Recognition and Appreciation Awards ceremony in August 2022 and in August 2023. The Recognition and Appreciation Awards celebrate the "added value" Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) educators and allies bring to our learning, working and social environments. Sponsorship of awards evidences Education Scotland's active support for and encouragement of BME educators to enter and remain in the profession, contributes to efforts to reach the Scottish Government's target of increasing the number of Black and Minority Ethnic teachers to 4% by 2030. The SAMEE awards align with the recommendations of the Teaching in a Diverse Scotland 2021 report:

"Scottish education now needs to look at sponsoring as another institutional strategy to adopt. Sponsors, unlike mentors, act as spotlights providing exposure, networking connections and endorsement." (Teaching in a Diverse Scotland, Increasing and Retaining Minority Ethnic Teachers – 3 Years On)

Indeed, the SAMEE awards raise awareness of the barriers Black and Minority Ethnic educators face and paves the path for a better understanding of how to break down those barriers. The awards shine a spotlight on the under-represented stories and talent across Scotland, giving us an increased insight into the diverse, talented individuals and organisations that are valuable for collaboration and future partnerships. They send a positive message to young BME people about education as a possible career path, indicating that we are serious about supporting work to create and support an anti-racist culture and curriculum within Scottish education.

At the August 2023 SAMEE Recognition and Appreciation awards, members of Education Scotland received the following recognition:

- The Building Racial Literacy team received the "Building Bridges for an Institution / Employer" award
- The Senior Education Officer for Equalities received the "Breaking Barriers" award
- The Lead Specialist for Racial Literacy received the "Outstanding Contribution to Anti-Racism in the Classroom" award (a month before joining Education Scotland).

Both of the above staff members who received awards happen to be racialised minorities, having joined the organisation in June 2021 and in September 2023. We hope that the awards encourage more racialised minorities to view Education Scotland as a great place to work, helping us work towards our Equality Strategy internal outcome: "More candidates from diverse backgrounds apply for roles." Sponsorship of the awards and receiving the above awards has strengthened Education Scotland's relatively new reputation as an organisation promoting anti-racist education and as a desirable place for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to work.

Education Scotland Professional Learning and Leadership

In addition to all the professional learning and leadership activities already outlined, Education Scotland's professional learning and leadership programmes have also been reviewed to ensure that equality issues are included:

- All the Middle Leadership programmes include diversity and anti-racism as core content, as well as inclusion legislation, policy and pedagogy
- Into Headship includes core modules on the Equality Act and sessions on LGBT inclusive education, anti-racist education and inclusion legislation, policy and pedagogy. For the Into Headship conference in March 2024, out of 118 attend in person, 78 have chosen the seminar on the HT role in supporting learning (ASN focus). A further 45 at the online conference.

The Middle Leaders Leading Change evaluation surveys indicated the impact of some of the above changes:

159/172 agree or strongly agree they have increased their understanding
of identity, privilege and power
170/172 Likely or very likely to implement learning in practice
160/172 Likely or very likely to share what they have learned

Finally, Education Scotland's professional learning and leadership website includes professional learning activities on inclusion, equalities and anti-racism that are accessible to all educators who register and log in.

Conclusion

Within Education Scotland, we have achieved significant strides in enhancing the awareness, understanding, and skills of our staff regarding equality and diversity. This internal progress reflects our commitment to becoming a more inclusive and diverse entity, recognising the many benefits such a transformation brings, while acknowledging we still have far to go. Building upon the foundational activities and processes we've established, our next steps involve deepening our collective understanding, further honing our skills in these critical areas and considering how reforming into a new Inspectorate and a refocussed National Agency can support this process. Moreover, we are set to intensify efforts to engage a larger portion of our staff in professional learning and development opportunities. This strategic push aims to foster a more informed, skilled, and inclusive workforce, aligned with our organisational values and goals.

Given the increased staff development offer, including the successful launch of an Equalities Staff Network, consideration will need to be given to ensure that we use effective strategies to measure the impact of all internal professional learning and networked learning.

In the previous year, our organisation's training initiative aimed at enhancing proficiency in the utilisation of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) has proven to be effective. This strategic effort has led to an increase in the number of EQIAs conducted throughout the last reporting period, signalling an advancement in our commitment to fostering equality and diversity within our operations. In light of this success, it is both prudent and necessary that we not only sustain these practices but also seek to broaden their scope. Specifically, we should aim to incorporate the use of Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA) into our operational framework. This expansion will ensure that our approach to impact assessment remains comprehensive, reflecting our dedication to promoting an inclusive, equitable, and rights-based education system.

Education Scotland has delivered a very broad range of resources, materials and professional learning to support practitioners and other partners in the areas of inclusion, equalities and diversity. Our efforts to achieve short-term external outcomes have primarily focused on three key strategies:
- the delivery of professional learning,
- the establishment of specialised networks for educators and leaders,
- the creation of resources, such as toolkits and case studies, to showcase effective practices.

These resources have garnered significant attention, with page views ranging from 78 to 2890, indicating a broad engagement from our target audience. Despite this success, the wide variance in page views highlights the need for a more refined understanding of our audience's needs and interests, which will require a data bank that all Education Scotland staff can contribute to. In our next strategic phase, we aim to improve the digital accessibility and user-friendliness of our online presence and this will be a critical component to address some of the variations. This would also help us to evaluate the relevance of our resources for different users.

Evaluations of our professional learning sessions indicate high satisfaction among participants, with the majority reporting significant benefits such as increased confidence, awareness, understanding, and knowledge. Similarly, a vast majority express a strong likelihood of applying the learned concepts in their professional settings and sharing insights with peers. Qualitative feedback, ranging from verbal and written comments to focus groups and case studies, further

enriches our understanding of our work's impact. This qualitative evidence highlights the profound effects of collaborative efforts and partnerships facilitated through networks and professional support programs. Although qualitative data hints at positive outcomes for children, young people and adult learners, the consistency and detailed tracking of these impacts remain challenging to quantify. Working with our new Data, Performance and Research team may help to refine our research methods to measure impact beyond self-report data.

Education Scotland consistently offers professional learning opportunities to a diverse array of stakeholders, including individual schools, establishments, local authorities, and various agencies. When these educational endeavours are carried out in collaboration with partners, the responsibility for evaluation typically falls to these partners. This arrangement, however, often leads to gaps in our data collection, as access to the evaluation results conducted by our partners remains restricted. Recognising the value of this data in enhancing our work, we are committed to exploring innovative methodologies and approaches to potentially bridge this gap.

Low response rates to evaluation forms and uncertainties regarding the accurate count of attendees pose challenges in assessing the full impact of our professional learning offers. The evaluation methods for our work also vary, ranging from pre- and post- evaluations, standardised Education Scotland evaluation forms, to bespoke forms created by the staff themselves. However, we have seen a welcome increase in the use of standard Key Performance Indicator questions in the evaluation data received for this report. Our internal work to improve awareness and use of core evaluative tools aims to enhance consistency in our evaluation processes as part of our ongoing organisational reform.

Our quantitative data primarily consists of metrics such as page views and attendance figures for professional learning sessions. While these figures provide insights into engagement levels, they fall short of evaluating the effectiveness of these resources or their impact on outcomes for children and young people. To address this limitation, qualitative data, including focus groups and both verbal and written feedback, plays a crucial role in offering a more comprehensive assessment of our initiatives' real-world effects. Incorporating more qualitative feedback into our evaluation of work will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our measurement processes. By narrowing our focus to fewer areas of delivery and production, we can allocate more time to conducting meaningful evaluations.

As we plan for the 2024-2025 delivery phase, addressing these evaluation challenges will be crucial. Unfortunately, these evaluation challenges have not changed since last year's Mainstreaming report. Nevertheless, as we have been acutely aware of this ongoing challenge across Education Scotland and in the reform of our organisation, a new focus with research at its core has been resourced with the creation of a new Data, Performance and Research Team. This team will help us apply improvement methodologies and theory of change approaches. The use of proxy measures to evaluate the chain of impact could also be a possibility with more focused resource provided by the new Team. These considerations will contribute to the ongoing discussions within Education Scotland about improving our approaches to data capture, analysis, and evaluation.