Scottish Attainment Challenge:
Recovery and Progress Report on 2021-22

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators
Do luchd-ionnsachaidh na h-Alba, le luchd-foghlaim Alba

Contents

Foreword

HM Chief Inspector and Chief Executive's Foreword

In February 2015 the First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge to bring a greater sense of urgency to achieving equity in educational outcomes. The Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021 was published In March 2021. The report presented the evidence of progress towards achieving the defining mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. In November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, outlined the Scottish Government's plans for the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and reinforced in the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress:

> Its mission is to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

Education Scotland is committed to working with the profession to support educational recovery, reduce variation and accelerate progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. As part of our support, attainment advisors worked with local authorities to gather the evidence of progress made on the next steps as identified in the individual local authority 5-year impact reports.

This report: Scottish Attainment Challenge Recovery and Progress 2021-22, provides a summary of the key findings and examples of practice to support improvement across all local authorities.

I hope that all those involved in delivering the Scottish Attainment Challenge will find this publication useful as they continue to focus on improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.

Section 1

1.1: Introduction

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was established to promote equity in education by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. It is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child. It focuses on improvement in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Reducing educational inequity and closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a long-term strategy which aims to impact on societal culture and thinking. On the 23 November 2021 the Cabinet Secretary announced the expanded mission statement, included below, of the refreshed SAC.

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

This report provides an overview of progress during 2021-22 and the impact of next steps as outlined in the 'Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016-2021'.

Leadership is recognised as a key driver of the success of any school or early learning and childcare setting. The report also takes a closer look at Leadership – Governance and Management in relation to the SAC. Also reflected in this report is summarised findings of each local authority's next steps in raising attainment and reducing educational inequity for all of Scotland's children and young people.

This report is intended to give a helpful overview of what is happening across Scotland. It is only one part of the suite of reporting and evaluation taking place across the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

1.2: Approach used

During the period April to June 2022, attainment advisors, in collaboration with SAC local authority project leads, gathered evidence from each local authority regarding progress with the SAC in the year 2021-22. The following high-level questions provided the framework for gathering evidence regarding progress and impact of SAC:

- What progress have you made with regards to the next steps outlined in the SAC: 2015-20 Impact Report and what impact has this had?

- Questions from the SAC Self-evaluation resource on Leadership – Governance and Management:

  - To what extent are your decision-making structures clear and transparent to all stakeholders?

  - In considering your approaches to planning, to what extent do you ensure that your plans are straightforward, clear and distinctly focused on equity?

  - How effectively do your quality assurance processes provide support and challenge, and empower schools, to focus on equity?

  - To what extent are you considering and ensuring long-term sustainability as part of your planning to achieve equity?

  - How effectively do you keep our elected members and other stakeholders informed about progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap?

  - How do you ensure that there is sufficient scrutiny by elected members of the Scottish Attainment Challenge work in the local authority and schools? Does this include the full range of work including Pupil Equity Funding and Care-Experienced Funding?

At the time of educational recovery, to what extent:

  - Do you ensure that our plans are straightforward, clear and distinctly focused on recovery?

  - Do you keep your elected members and other stakeholders informed about the impact of COVID-19 on the most disadvantaged learners and progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap?

- What are your next steps / future priorities for the SAC?

Section 2

2.1: Progress and impact of next steps from Year 5 Report

In December 2020, attainment advisors (AAs) gathered evidence from all local authorities to support publication of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Impact Report for 2015-2020. As well as providing evidence on the impact of the first five years of the SAC, local authorities identified their priorities and next steps for 2021-22. This section outlines the progress made in delivering those priorities/next steps.

Whilst all local authorities have strived to make progress on next steps, this has not been without its challenges given the difficulties that they have faced, and continue to face, as a result of COVID-19.

Key areas reported on through these previously identified next steps for improvement were: Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), the Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund (CECYP), data improvement outcomes and career long professional learning.

Pupil Equity Fund

PEF was identified as a next step by the majority of local authorities. For some, progress involved reviewing the mechanisms for planning and reporting within the existing school improvement planning cycle and reporting on standards and qualities. Auditing of PEF plans to provide bespoke advice and guidance to schools is a feature of the progress being made by local authorities and, in many, this work is supported by the attainment advisor.

The local authority reviewed all PEF planning, monitoring and reporting processes in August 2021. As a result, they have strengthened their reporting of outcomes of PEF spend to ensure the impact of the fund is maximised.

Many local authorities have improved how they provide support to schools in ensuring that funding is maximised. Advice and guidance have been given in a variety of different ways. These include network meetings for relevant stakeholders and headteachers, attainment advisors providing support and challenge to schools and also reviews of PEF plans.

The authority has clear expectations that all schools will report evaluatively on the impact of the PEF. In planning for PEF, it is expected that improvement outcomes are embedded within clearly identified interventions and approaches. The authority, with the support of the AA, will quality-assure and collate the PEF reports and plans from all schools. This will provide a clear overview of the impact of PEF for 2021-22 and the intended outcomes for 2022-23.

Since January 2022 the equity team and AA continued PEF/SAC visits to provide support and advice to schools. Analysis of Schools Programme plans in 2021-22 found that 50% lacked specific focus in outcomes or measures. By December 2021, through targeted and intensive support from the equity team, 91% of those schools now had appropriate outcomes and measures.

Improving the planning for and reporting on the PEF has been a focus for many local authorities. Evidence from the next steps suggests that there was recognition that previous processes, plans and reports were not always as effective as they could be in determining outcomes or in demonstrating impact.

This has been further supported with the introduction of a new, separate planning template for PEF and a range of support to ensure school leaders are engaging in robust contextual analysis to inform PEF planning.

PEF planning, monitoring and reporting has been improved each year and is aligned with the school improvement cycle. A new PEF planning format has been created and is used by almost all establishments. This is ensuring relevant measures are in place to measure the impact of plans, interventions and approaches.

Data

Half of all local authorities identified a wide range of data improvement outcomes in their next steps. More than half have made solid progress on those outcomes. This included:

- how data is used and analysed in informing the poverty-related attainment gap
- building capacity and confidence of staff
- developing appropriate systems to support the collection and analysis of data, including data packs
- using data to track and monitor specific cohorts
- data driven dialogues
- data-informed decision making

Many local authorities have reviewed and improved the way data is collected and collated with some introducing new software and the management of data systems to deliver this. Key areas for the use and analysis of data includes the focus on improving outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People, those learners targeted through PEF and attendance and health and wellbeing.

Through the introduction of new software (Power BI) an in-depth overview of concise and accessible attainment data is available. As a result, school leaders are able to reflect, evaluate and plan for improvement in order to address the poverty-related attainment gap. Robust tracking and monitoring systems are now in place across all primaries informing planning and accurate reporting. There is evidence from 2021-22 predicted levels of the numeracy gap closing.

There is some strong evidence of data being used effectively to identify areas of strength and for improvement. The 'Data Driven Dialogue' approach has been adopted by some authorities. This has led to a reported increase in both the robustness of the evaluation of the data and in the confidence of practitioners.

The data driven dialogue approach has increased confidence of school leadership teams when interpreting and analysing data to inform Standard and Quality reporting and School Improvement Planning. As a result, the quality of plans has increased, leading to greater validity and less variation in reporting outcomes.

One approach reported was the introduction of 'data for improvement visits'. Quality improvement officers and the AA engaged with school leadership teams to focus on their use of data to inform progress and monitor improvement. Another approach reported was working in partnership with a university partner to develop self-improving schools. Where such approaches are evident they have strengthened data analysis, data-informed decision making, and evidence-based approaches.

The visits, which have been introduced across the primary sector, take place three times per year. As these visits have become embedded into practice there has been an increasing focus on how schools are identifying and addressing poverty-related attainment gaps.

Care Experienced Children and Young People

The majority of local authorities explicitly identified improvements in their work to support Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) in their next steps. Just under half were able to report improvements in supporting this group of children and young people. Some have made progress by working in partnership with third sector organisations

The local authority has been working with partners to continue to provide targeted support for care experienced children and young people as well as those on the verge of care. Programmes include family group conferencing, support for care experienced young people at risk of disengaging from education, school and community mentoring, and after-school learning and support for primary aged pupils.

In a few local authorities, virtual schools have been set up and positive impact is beginning to emerge.

The virtual school is now fully embedded and staffed to provide support for CECYP. Interventions are delivered in partnership with families, base schools and relevant professionals and are available within a school or community setting and/or the young person's home, as appropriate. Extensive work has improved the effective use of data and led to an improved system of monitoring and tracking of the attainment, achievement and wellbeing of all CECYP. The improvement in these processes and the use of data has informed high quality planning that is providing exciting and innovative opportunities for universal, targeted and intensive intervention to maximise outcomes and attainment for children and young people involved with the virtual school.

All care experienced learners are identified and supported by the virtual headteacher.

The local authority has appointed a virtual headteacher to oversee the outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People. They have supported professional development for school leaders, the improved use of data to inform planning, identification of targeted interventions and more effective resource allocation.

There is a range of evidence that the CECYP fund is being used effectively in a variety of ways.

Funding used to support outdoor learning has shown a 100% increase in the number of outdoor visits and pupil participation days. In a survey carried out in 2021, young people reported that they were learning and feeling safe through their engagement in planned outdoor learning.

The principal officer for data is creating data sets which will allow the local authority and head teachers to identify their CECYP and plan for interventions to support improvements in attainment.

Attainment discussions with schools, which form part of the quality improvement calendar, have a focus on CECYP to ensure that the right support is given. Discussions with secondary schools also focus on positive destinations.

The care experienced education team are now fully staffed and help support the attainment and engagement of care-experienced pupils. Centrally and school managed resources are more effectively targeted and utilised to address the key pressure points for the education authority.

The local authority has also used funding to employ an additional corporate parenting teacher this year, who directly supports children and young people who are care experienced. This has resulted in more learners who struggle to fully engage in their education, receiving the 1:1 support they need.

The virtual school is now fully embedded and staffed to provide support for CECYP. Interventions are delivered in partnership with families, base schools and relevant professionals and are available within a school or community setting and/or the young person's home, as appropriate.

A collaborative approach is evident in a few of the local authorities making progress in this area.

The chief social worker and chief education officer are working together to ensure strategic plans are in place for the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund.

Data sharing flow protocols have been established between social work and education.

Career Long Professional Learning

Further developing Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) with a focus on equity was included in the next steps by a third of local authorities. In relation to the progress made, a number of local authorities have indicated that professional learning builds capacity and confidence in using data.

The local authority has provided 'learning from your data' training as well as support for class teachers and middle leaders on data analysis. This has led to an increase in data confidence and data literacy whilst ensuring a robust level of evaluation is embedded across establishments. The authority has successfully appointed 'data champions' in each school cluster and school leaders are ably supported by central team staff.

A training programme on effective data use is currently being created and will be rolled out to local authority senior staff and head teachers at the start of next session.

In some local authorities, sharing practice and practitioner enquiry has been an effective way to ensure there is a focus on equity. In others, focusing on leadership has supported system improvement.

All workstreams have made progress in developing professional learning using a practitioner enquiry/action research-based approach. Feedback from colleagues indicates a positive impact on pedagogical practice and their ability to make informed evidence-based decisions to drive forward change.

'Leadership for Equity', a comprehensive professional learning programme for school leaders has been created. This suite of professional learning aims to equip education leaders with the necessary knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills which build on the lessons learned over the last five years. 31 school leaders across the local authority have completed this suite of professional learning to date. Evaluations show that 100% of participants agree or strongly agree that this professional learning has supported them with developing key strategic actions for equity.

Opportunities for professional dialogue and sharing learning have been embedded into headteacher development days. A virtual 'Excellence and Equity' afternoon was held, and four schools presented their progress and impact using Pupil Equity Funding. A range of partners attended the event. As a result, stakeholders are starting to have an increased awareness of the impact of local targeted approaches.

In a minority of local authorities, evidence of progress was reported on tracking and monitoring, the development of quality improvement frameworks, raising attainment plans/strategies, self-evaluation and leadership.

Increased focus on tracking and monitoring has paid dividends with headteachers being supported and challenged more effectively. Central officers, cluster business managers and attainment advisor continue to support Pupil Equity Fund planning though guidance and training. This has resulted in more consultative planning, evidence-based decision making, data driven evaluation and reporting of impact.

The local authority has updated their annual quality improvement framework and is committed to quality improvement visits that focus on attainment and equity. The framework and visits provide guidance, support and challenge for school leaders.

The local authority is developing a raising achievement strategy. The strategy provides an opportunity to focus on how success will be measured through a data-informed approach and is underpinned by quality improvement methodology.

Self-evaluation responses in relation to approaches to removing poverty-related barriers from 64 education settings across all sectors have been analysed and evaluated by local authority officers to inform strategic decision making.

2.2: Leadership – Governance and Management

The SAC Impact Report for 2015-2020 identified key lessons learned over the first 5 years of the Challenge. One of these was having a shared understanding of the SAC programme. The report highlighted the importance of having an explicit and clear vision for equity at both authority and school level. Strategic planning which sets out well-defined objectives and measures was recognised as being crucial.

The SAC Self-evaluation resource was updated in September 2020 to take account of COVID-19. This resource was designed to support the education system in self-evaluating their work in relation to equity. Attainment advisors used the section on 'Leadership – governance and management' to evaluate and report on the approaches and processes used within each local authority during 2021-22.

Evidence from across Scotland highlights several effective approaches and processes for governance and management. Key themes emerging include:

Quality assurance processes

Evidence indicates that processes are in place for quality assurance of the SAC in the majority of local authorities.

In most examples, quality assurance (QA) visits to schools are described. Visits are reported as regular opportunities for central officers to provide support and challenge to schools on how they are planning for and achieving equity. These are carried out as either stand-alone visits or as part of wider attainment and achievement meetings. In some cases, Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is a standing item on attainment meetings or wider cluster/network meetings. In many cases, QA visits are described as being supported by data. This is resulting in a specific focus on progress, impact and identifying key areas for improvement. Where QA visits are mentioned, these vary from two to four times a year.

Processes for central quality assurance of school planning were evident. In the majority of examples, plans for closing the attainment gap and PEF are part of the school improvement cycle. As a result, there is increased knowledge of planned approaches and impact across the authorities. In some cases, universal, targeted or intensive support is then identified and delivered by the local authority often in partnership with the attainment advisor and the wider Education Scotland team.

Over the last year quality assurance processes have been developed to consider a universal, targeted or intensive approach, ensuring appropriate support and challenge to all schools. This includes the ongoing development of empowered system through their Self-Improving Schools programme. This work has recently been reviewed with the support of an ADES/Education Scotland Collaboration and has evaluated the progress to date and supported the identification of next steps, supporting consistency across the service with a clear focus on improving outcomes for young people.

The QA calendar sets clear dates and expectations for the submission of predicted levels twice in the session before final submission in June. The analysis of this data led to targeted follow-up for some schools.

Reports suggest that QA processes continue to evolve. Staffing levels and the impact of COVID-19 are noted as having a significant impact on the regularity of visits and strategic meetings. In a few cases, QA is mentioned as an area that will be reviewed moving forward.

Strategic Plans

Priorities to close the poverty-related attainment gap within strategic plans are evidenced in the majority of local authorities. In most cases, annual service-level quality improvement reports have a focus on equity. Reports also describe links to National Improvement Framework (NIF) planning, Educational Recovery plans and local poverty action plans.

A refreshed service quality improvement framework supports education staff and partners to create annual plans that focus on equity and set out how they will meet local authority targets. This approach allows schools to take into account their individual context and be specific and creative.

There are indications of a range of stakeholders being involved in strategic planning. In some local authorities, dedicated strategic groups have been established to support planning and reporting. In a few instances, Parent Councils are consulted on these plans. There is a wide range of measures in place to monitor impact. Often these measures are aligned to those specified in the NIF.

The NIF plan is seen as an evolving set of developments based on a wide range of priorities across the service. Stakeholders and partners continue to be consulted as the plan progresses.

In some local authorities, specific workstreams and leads have been identified to take forward strategic priorities on equity. In other cases, there is a dedicated SAC lead for the authority. Overall, the evidence indicates that authority level planning aligns with school level planning. Where this is working well, it is built into a cycle of planning and improvement. Guidance is shared with schools to support planning and reporting. As a result, schools understand their responsibilities and how these link to strategic and national priorities.

The planning process for SAC and PEF is embedded in the improvement cycle for all establishments as part of the wider improvement planning guidance and expectations. This approach is well embedded and understood by establishments and all school leaders are aware of their responsibility to plan in line with key National Improvement Framework and local authority priorities, including closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Reports to Elected Members

There is evidence that the majority of local authorities regularly inform Elected Members about progress within the Scottish Attainment Challenge. This includes reports on all aspects of the Attainment Scotland Funding, data on attainment and narrative on the impact of spend. Additionally, updates on the impact of COVID-19 and recovery are a focus.

The team report on different aspects of SAC to local councillors, providing a layer of governance and accountability of SAC and each of the associated funding steams at local level. The Chief Education Officer also reports annually to the citywide parent and pupil council boards. This again facilitates a transparent and inclusive process around SAC planning, spend and reporting on impact.

Where evidenced, Elected Members are involved in scrutiny of reports, plans and attainment through scheduled committee meetings. In a few examples, headteachers are involved with these discussions with Elected Members. In most, data is shared with Elected Members. This supports scrutiny of progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap. In some areas, plans for spend are taken to Education Committee for approval by Elected Members.

Other areas identified

Further to the three themes above, a range of locally used approaches were identified as key features of governance. These include raising attainment strategies, quality improvement frameworks, having clear governance structures and participatory budgeting.

Next Steps/Areas for Development identified

A minority of local authorities identified next steps for leadership and governance. These included:

- Building plans for sustainability
- Recovering from disruption to governance due to the impact of COVID-19
- Further developing quality assurance approaches and decision-making structures
- Ensuring a more integrated approach to joint working
- Increasing opportunities to engage with Elected Members
- Using governance information to target schools needing further support.

Section 3

3.1: Progress towards setting Stretch Aims and implementing the SAC refresh

Stretch Aims

The Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (the Framework) was developed to support the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC). A key element of the Framework is the requirement for locally identified stretch aims to be set out in local authority education service plans.

It is anticipated that setting stretch aims will drive improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty. A 'core model' setting local stretch aims measurable by the National Improvement Framework key measures will be set by local authorities; 'core plus' models will reflect additional local priorities.

At the time of writing, all local authorities had made progress towards setting stretch aims within the timelines set out as part of the Framework. All local authorities have now submitted their local stretch aims to the Scottish Government.

Almost all local authorities have indicated that they are using a wide range of data sets and/or are carrying out contextual analysis to support their work in arriving at ambitious, but achievable, stretch aims that are relevant to their own context.

The Equity Strategy Group is using their baseline contextual analysis, historical attainment data from the past 3-5 years and national data sets to consider ambitious but achievable stretch aims for the local authority. Additionally, the latest data from 2021-22 and school-level projections for 2022-23 will be utilised to inform these stretch aims once available.

To support the creation of suitable stretch aims the majority of local authorities have engaged with a range of stakeholders including headteachers. This approach is helping to ensure that the development of stretch aims is a collaborative and iterative process between local authority officers, senior leaders in schools and other relevant partners such as Education Scotland.

Some local authorities have indicated that they are networking more widely within their Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) or at national level to support their own thinking on stretch aims. For example, all local authorities within one RIC took the decision to focus their attention collaboratively on improving the attendance of children and young people who are most impacted by poverty. Several other local authorities will focus their attention on improving attendance as either their health and wellbeing stretch aim or as part of their core plus measures.

The local authority is making progress towards setting stretch aims and implementing the SAC refresh. Headteachers are being fully consulted and involved in the direction of travel for the implementation of the SAC refresh as well as stretch aims and priorities for Strategic Equity Funding allocation.

Senior officers are currently working with headteachers on school targets to ensure they align with the local authority target for 22/23 and the longer-term stretch aims that are ambitious and achievable. The regional Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) lead has collaborated with other local authorities through the SAC network facilitated by Education Scotland.

Implementing the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge

In partnership with colleagues at Education Scotland, all local authorities continue to develop strategies for implementing the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC). Some are disseminating key messages at authority-wide headteachers meetings and development days. There is focus on publications such as the Framework and other key guidance publications in relation to Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund. Where appropriate, this is being supported by the designated attainment advisor.

Evidence suggests that some local authorities are working to enhance the amount of support being provided to schools and headteachers in relation to their PEF allocations. This includes providing specific professional learning for senior leaders to ensure that there is a clear focus on developing policies and practices which underpin closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Mechanisms such as self-evaluation visits to establishments are evident in some local authorities. These are providing further support and challenge around the spending of PEF. At the same time, this ensures that there is a greater focus on measuring the impact of PEF and other Attainment Scotland Funding streams. Taking cognisance of the most recent publications, a few local authorities have already revised their local PEF guidance to support senior leaders in their utilisation of allocated funding.

The local authority is updating PEF local guidance in line with the expectations within the SAC refresh. A programme of support for schools is being planned for 2022-23 around effective planning, measurement of progress and impact.

The local authority has updated PEF local guidance in line with the expectations within the SAC refresh. Information sessions have been delivered to school leaders through head teacher support days and the Equity Network. Tracking and monitoring systems and training for school leaders around data are in place to support local and national expectations. A detailed programme of support and quality assurance has been developed for 2022-2023.

As part of the refreshed SAC mission, the notion of specified Challenge and Schools Programme local authorities has been removed. Proportionate funding is allocated to all local authorities through the universal Strategic Equity Fund (SEF). This has meant that previous Challenge and Schools Programme authorities have had to adapt to their new allocations. Most of the Challenge authorities have used a range of strategies, including consultation with stakeholders and robust self-evaluation, to manage the phased reduction in funding. Some local authorities are supporting Schools Programme schools with the transition to the new resource allocation by allocating funding and resources from their SEF.

The local authority has robust plans in place to manage the immediate reduction of funding as they transition from challenge authority status. This is being carefully managed by local authority officers and includes an extensive consultation with all stakeholders about the direction of travel over the next four years.

For session 2022/23, as part of the transition into the new SAC refresh model, each of the former Schools' Programme schools will continue to receive a portion of the Strategic Equity Fund to fund temporary posts and approaches, based on the needs of those school communities and learning communities.

3.2: Next steps

All local authorities (LAs) have worked with their attainment advisors to review their progress and identify clear next steps. Whilst there are some commonalities, next steps are relevant to local authority contexts and where they are in their improvement journey. Key themes emerging include the effective use of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF), stretch aims and data. All of which are important to the successful implementation of the new SAC Framework.

Attainment Scotland Fund

The refreshed SAC programme is backed by a further commitment of £1 billion from Scottish Government through the ASF and aims to ensure that equity lies at the heart of the education experience for all. Resources, through the ASF, are provided to all 32 local authorities through Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding and to schools through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

Evidence indicates that most local authorities will ensure the development of clear plans for the deployment of the ASF in line with the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (the Framework). Strategies for implementing the SAC refresh will continue to be developed. In some local authorities this will include establishing a SAC team and/or reviewing the current approach to the SAC governance. Clarification of roles and remits of local authority officers will be central to this. This should ensure approaches and interventions are carefully and strategically planned.

With the Strategic Equity Funding, the local authority will establish a SAC team, comprising of representation from across all sectors of the local authority, the new SAC lead officer and attainment advisor. This team will work together using the SAC Theory of Change / Logic Model approach to plan bespoke targeted work across the local authority, including the Community Learning and Development sector.

Work will include a review of SEF workstream delivery models and exploring alternative approaches to governance.

There is recognition that planning of ASF should be carried out in consultation with stakeholders, including headteachers, attainment advisors and external partners. Many local authorities who have included improvements in approaches to ASF spending, as a next step, want to ensure accountability and collaboration in delivering appropriate and targeted interventions and approaches. By doing so they recognise this should lead to improvements and progress in narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Develop a four-year strategic plan for the Strategic Equity Fund in collaboration with senior leaders and headteachers.

Re-establish a robust and consistently applied governance structure which will provide effective challenge and accountability across all aspects of ASF.

Stretch Aims

The Framework highlights the requirement of local authorities to set annual, ambitious locally identified stretch aims. At the time of writing this report all local authorities had made progress towards setting stretch aims for 2022-23. It is anticipated that setting stretch aims will drive improvements in outcomes for children and young people, particularly those most impacted by poverty.

Develop core and plus stretch aims that are relevant, ambitious and achievable and will support recovery and progress. Support schools in meeting local authority stretch aims.

There is recognition of a need for continued focus to work towards achieving these stretch aims and embedding processes in setting future stretch aims in line with the Framework. It will be important for local authorities to have clear and robust procedures in place.

The local authority will ensure that going forward processes and procedures to set stretch aims are established and embedded to ensure collaborative conversations and effective use of school level data.

The Framework clearly outlines the setting of local stretch aims should be an iterative and collaborative process between local authorities and schools. For some local authorities next steps clearly reference the importance of engaging with stakeholders in setting and agreeing stretch aims.

The completion of stakeholder engagement, robust data analysis and self-evaluation activity to inform and set stretch aims for the session 2022-23 by September 2022. This will include setting localised core plus stretch aims.

Relevant stakeholders will continue to be consulted in the formulation of stretch aims and evaluation of progress towards achieving these.

Data

Although less than half of all local authorities have included a next step on data this has previously been a focus for many. Using data for improvement is crucial and it is therefore important to ensure all relevant stakeholders are data literate.

Data-literacy has increased for school and middle leaders. The focus now will be to ensure that classroom practitioners are well-equipped to interpret and use data to inform decisions.

To support schools in the effective use of data some local authorities are developing appropriate tools that will assist schools in tracking and analysing attainment. This should result in further improvement in the articulation of gaps and identification of specific groups of learners who would benefit from more targeted interventions in order to improve attainment.

Further enable schools in the effective use of data by providing education managers, schools and senior leaders, tools to analyse their own data allowing filtering and the targeting of specific groups of learners.

The use of both qualitative and quantitative data will evidence whether expected impact has been achieved.

Other next steps identified

Further to the three themes above, there were other common themes in a minority of local authorities' next steps. These include:

- Self-evaluation
- Quality assurance
- Professional learning
- Remits / structure
- Strategic planning
- PEF planning, tracking and monitoring
- SAC refresh
- Collaboration
- Governance
- Leadership
- Partnerships

Section 4

4.1: Glossary

Term/ acronym	Meaning
AA	Attainment advisor
ACEL	Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level
ASF	Attainment Scotland Fund
BGE	Broad General Education
CECYP	Care experienced children and young people
ES	Education Scotland
Insight	Insight is a benchmarking tool designed to help bring about improvements for learners in the Senior Phase (S4-S6). The system is updated twice annually, around September for attainment results and February for school leavers' data.
LA	Local authority
PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
NIF	National Improvement Framework
RIC	Regional Improvement Collaborative
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SEF	Strategic Equity Funding
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SNSA	Scottish National Standardised Assessments
SRA	Senior Regional Advisor

Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change
The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model

What is the Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model?

A logic model is a visual planning tool that shows the journey from resources and activities to a programme's intended outcome.

- **Inputs** – human, financial, organisational and community resources available

- **Activities** – processes, tools, events and actions

- **Outcomes** – expected changes from a Programme's activities

The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model illustrates, at a high level, the activities that will lead to the short, medium and long term outcomes designed to achieve the Scottish Attainment Challenge Mission '*to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap*'.

The Logic Model design seeks to balance the complexity of the Scottish Attainment Challenge Mission and the simplicity of a useable tool which is accessible and meaningful to all stakeholders.

How was the Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model developed?

The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model was developed in collaboration and in consultation with a wide range of education stakeholders including Education Scotland, Local Authority Scottish Attainment Challenge Leads, the Scottish Education Council, the Teachers' Panel and the International Council of Education Advisors though a series of virtual, interactive workshops.

The Logic Model draws on the evaluation of the first Scottish Attainment Challenge programme and highlights activities that evidence shows positively impact attainment e.g. data literacy; collaborative working; targeting, selecting and evaluating approaches; understanding barriers; culture and ethos; professional learning. Nonetheless, we understand that the specific activities, or combination of activities, that lead to change will vary between schools and between local authorities to meet the needs of individual children. The activities included in the model are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

How can I use the Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model to support my work?

In response to stakeholder feedback, the Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model is a 'nested' model illustrating the varying activities from the national strategic level to the operational school and local level. The different stakeholders in the programme are represented in the following four models:

- **Overall logic model** – summarising all inputs and activities

- **National logic model** – for central government, national bodies

- **Regional/local logic model** – for Regional Improvement Collaboratives, Local Authority Scottish Attainment Challenge leads

- **School/community logic model** – for school leaders, practitioners, children and young people, parents, carers, families, community organisations, third sector

Note that the inputs and activities are unique to each layer; the outcomes remain consistent across all logic models to reflect the common goals.

The logic model has been designed to be used to support:

- Planning e.g. support development and monitoring of stretch aims, school improvement plans

- Communicating the Scottish Attainment Challenge Mission

- Promoting system wide understanding of short, medium and long term outcomes

- Collaboration and engagement with wider stakeholders on activities and the outcomes of the programme

- Forming the basis for evaluation

- Celebrating success

At a national level the logic models will primarily be used as a planning tool for evaluation and programme management purposes.

The logic models can be used locally in a number of ways to support progress towards the Scottish Attainment Challenge Mission and as a systematic tool to drive improvement in a school or locality; there is no one-size fits all approach.

We recognise that local authorities will use the logic model in their local context, regardless of what stage they are at in their involvement in the Scottish Attainment Challenge. If local authorities have moved beyond some of the short term outcomes they can focus on the medium and long-term outcomes in their approach.

Schools and local authorities are not expected to formally report against progress towards the logic model outcomes. Rather, discussions around this would form part of the usual dialogue with Education Scotland Regional Improvement Teams, including Attainment Advisors. The model is one of a range of tools which schools can use to support planning and monitoring of progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. For example, it can be used alongside school self-evaluation to inform discussions about progress and next steps.

Scottish Government
Education Scotland

March 2022

Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change
The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model

INPUTS

National
- Ministers
- Scottish Government
- Education Scotland

Regional
- Regional Improvement Collaboratives
- Senior Regional

Local authorities
- Elected members
- Education
- Wider services

Schools
- Head teachers
- Practitioners
- Support staff
- Early Learning and Childcare leaders/staff
- Educational Psychologists
- Allied Health Professionals

Communities
- Children and Young people
- Parents and carers
- Third sector
- Community Learning and Development

ACTIVITIES

National
- Clear policy framework and guidance for SAC
- Distribution of funding
- Evaluation of national progress
- Support and challenge around Stretch Aims
- Support for use of data and self-evaluation
- Support for effective collaboration
- Professional learning

Regional
- Development of regional plan and work programme
- Support for collaborative working
- Sharing of good practice
- Professional learning

Local authorities
- Setting stretch aims for improvement
- Tracking, monitoring and data analysis tools
- Professional learning around planning, interventions and approaches
- Development of local authority wide approaches
- Collaborating with services and communities

Schools
- School and class level planning
- Use of data to target interventions
- Schools are empowered to implement evidence based interventions/ approaches to meet local needs
- Collaboration within/across schools and local authority
- Self-evaluation, tracking and reporting of progress

Communities
- Children & Young People and family co-production activities
- Third sector partnerships

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Leadership
Actively developing empowered leadership in the education system with embedded structures in place to improve learning, teaching and self-evaluation.

Professional learning
All practitioners engage in professional learning with a focus on equity and reducing poverty related attainment gap.

Collaboration
Established collaborations with local authorities, schools, the third sector and families and communities identifying key priorities across education delivery.

Data and evidence
Practitioners are able to use data effectively to identify the needs of their learners and improve learning and teaching.

Shared understanding
There is shared understanding and shared work amongst all local authorities, practitioners and partners on the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims/mission.

Focus
Sustained focus on physical and mental health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy using pedagogical skills to improve personal achievement, attainment, and positive destinations for children and young people living in poverty.

Readiness to learn
A sustained focus on children and young people's readiness to learn through focusing on engagement and attendance, confidence and wellbeing.

Engagement
Meaningful engagement with children and young people and their families and communities embedded in decision making in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Approaches
All parts of the system are aware of the range of approaches to support equity, can apply them in their local context and identify impact evidence.

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES

Leadership
Strong leadership in the education system, using skills developed through continuous professional learning focused on equity and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Professional learning
Professional learning focussed on equity is embedded and practitioners use these skills and knowledge to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Collaboration
Strategic collaboration across the education system results in innovative, impactful and sustainable approaches to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Data and evidence
An embedded use of data and evidence is used to build and share an understanding of effective interventions in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Culture and ethos
An embedded culture and ethos based on educational equity exists in the education system that promotes high aspirations and recognises broader achievement for all children and young people and their families.

Learning and teaching
High quality learning, teaching and assessment, focussing on achieving equity for learners, across Health and Wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.

Readiness to learn
Improvements in engagement, attendance, confidence and wellbeing of children and young people.

Engagement
Embedded engagement and participation of children and young people, families and communities in the learner journey.

Approaches
Evidence based approaches embedded in the system with continuous refinement/adaptation based on effective interventions in the local context.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Closing the gap
Closing of the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people, in line with stretch aims.

Embedded practices
An embedded culture focused on equity continuously supporting and developing practice at all levels of the system addressing impacts of the poverty related attainment gap.

Educational outcomes
Children and young people have rights to equality of opportunity to positive and excellent educational outcomes regardless of their background.

Education system
An education system which actively addresses poverty, removing barriers through inclusive ethos, practice and approaches for children and young people, parents and carers and practitioners.

Achievement
An education system which encourages, reflects, and values the breadth of achievements that contribute to improved outcomes for children.

VISION

Excellence through raising attainment
Excellence through raising attainment and improving outcomes: ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

Achieving equity
Achieving equity: ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

MISSION

To use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap to deliver on the Government's vision of equity and excellence in education.

Assumptions

- The Logic Model draws on experience from the SAC programme to date and associated evaluation and highlights activities that evidence shows positively impact attainment (data literacy, collaborative working, targeting selecting and evaluating approaches, understanding barriers, culture and ethos, professional learning)
- There is no hierarchy of outcomes in terms of importance to the programme
- There is a recognition that some of the outcomes will need to be continuously met, as they are contingent on ongoing activity
- Collaboration with partners will lead to innovative and impactful approaches.
- Engagement with Children and Young People and their families will lead to better decision making
- Leadership and professional learning will support development of a positive culture and ethos
- Use of data and evidence when they are critically interrogated can lead to better targetting of those who need support and can assist with monitoring of progress
- The right to and goals of education are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Local authorities have the statutory duties to provide education, deliver educational improvement, secure best value, and fulfill their role as employer

Key Resources

- National Improvement Hub
- Equity Toolkit
- Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards forwards

Contextual factors

Impact of Covid	Increase in cost of living/ poverty	Education Reform	Changes in funding models	Parent/Carer/ Family engagement	Political change
Focus on Health and Wellbeing	Voice of Children and Young People	Focus on wider achievement	Role of local authorities	Partnership working	Local context

Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change
The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model – School/Community Level

INPUTS

School and class level input
- School leaders
- Teachers
- Support staff
- Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings
- Further education

Professional input:
- Educational psychologists
- Allied Health Professionals, e.g. Speech and Language Therapists

Children and Young People

Parents, carers, families and communities

Third sector networks/ relationships

Higher Education/ Schools of Education

ACTIVITIES

- Learning and teaching is desiged to maximise children's progress and attainment, and address gaps
- Schools are empowered to implement evidence based interventions/approaches to meet local needs
- Incorporate stretch aims in school planning for improvement
- Self-evaluation and ongoing tracking and monitoring of progress at school and class level is used to plan further support & intervention to improve children's attainment
- Overall evaluation of progress and next steps in Standards and Quality report
- Equity focus within professional learning including practitioner enquiry
- Collaboration within/across schools and local authority

- Support to address (poverty related) learning gaps

- Co-production activities
- Pupil led groups

- Co-production activities
- Family Learning projects

- Professional learning
- Collaboration
- Engagement with Children and Young People

- Equity focused Initial Teacher Education
- Research and evaluation
- Partnerships with Regional Improvement Collaboratives, Local Authorities and schools

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Leadership
Actively developing empowered leadership in the education system with embedded structures in place to improve learning, teaching and self-evaluation.

Professional learning
All practitioners engage in professional learning with a focus on equity and reducing poverty related attainment gap.

Collaboration
Established collaborations with local authorities,schools, the third sector and families and communities identifying key priorities across education delivery.

Data and evidence
Practitioners are able to use data effectively to identify the needs of their learners and improve learning and teaching.

Shared understanding
There is shared understanding and shared work amongst all local authorities, practitioners and partners on the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims/mission.

Focus
Sustained focus on physical and mental health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy using pedagogical skills to improve personal achievement, attainment, and positive destinations for children and young people living in poverty.

Readiness to learn
A sustained focus on children and young people's readiness to learn through focusing on engagement and attendance, confidence and wellbeing.

Engagement
Meaningful engagement with children and young people and their families and communities embedded in decision making in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Approaches
All parts of the system are aware of the range of approaches to support equity, can apply them in their local context and identify impact evidence.

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES

Leadership
Strong leadership in the education system, using skills developed through continuous professional learning focused on equity and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Professional learning
Professional learning focussed on equity is embedded and practitioners use these skills to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Collaboration
Strategic collaboration across the education system results in innovative, impactful and sustainable approaches to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Data and evidence
An embedded use of data and evidence is used to build and share an understanding of effective interventions in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Culture and ethos
An embedded culture and ethos based on educational equity exists in the education system that promotes high aspirations and recognises broader achievement for all children and young people and their families.

Learning and teaching
High quality learning, teaching and assessment, focussing on achieving equity for learners, across Health and Wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.

Readiness to learn
Improvements in engagement, attendance, confidence and wellbeing of children and young people.

Engagement
Embedded engagement and participation of children and young people, families and communities in the learner journey.

Approaches
Evidence based approaches embedded in the system with continuous refinement/ adaptation based on effective interventions in the local context.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Closing the gap
Closing of the attainment gap,between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people, in line with stretch aims.

Embedded practices
An embedded culture focused on equity continuously supporting and developing practice at all levels of the system addressing impacts of the poverty related attainment gap.

Educational outcomes
Children and young people have rights to equality of opportunity to positive and excellent educational outcomes regardless of their background.

Education system
An education system which actively addresses poverty, removing barriers through inclusive ethos, practice and approaches for children and young people, parents and carers and practitioners.

Achievement
An education system which encourages, reflects, and values the breadth of achievements that contribute to improved outcomes for children.

Key Resources
- National Improvement Hub
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VISION

Excellence through raising attainment
Excellence through raising attainment and improving outcomes: ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

Achieving equity
Achieving equity: ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

MISSION

To use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap to deliver on the Government's vision of equity and excellence in education.

Assumptions
- The Logic Model draws on experience from the SAC programme to date and associated evaluation and highlights activities that evidence shows positively impact attainment (data literacy, collaborative working, targeting selecting and evaluating approaches, understanding barriers, culture and ethos, professional learning)
- There is no hierarchy of outcomes in terms of importance to the programme
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- Collaboration with partners will lead to innovative and impactful approaches
- Engagement with Children and Young People and their families will lead to better decision making
- Leadership and professional learning will support development of a positive culture and ethos
- Use of data and evidence when they are critically interrogated can lead to better targetting of those who need support and can assist with monitoring of progress
- The right to and goals of education are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Local authorities have the statutory duties to provide education, deliver educational improvement, secure best value, and fulfill their role as employer

Contextual factors

Impact of Covid	Increase in cost of living/ poverty	Education Reform	Changes in funding models	Parent/Carer/ Family engagement	Political change
Focus on Health and Wellbeing	Voice of Children and Young People	Focus on wider achievement	Role of local authorities	Partnership working	Local context

Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change
The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model – Regional/Local Level

INPUTS

Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs)

Local authorities – Education

Local authorities – wider services
- Community Learning and Development
- Family Link workers
- Community Planning
- Partnerships

ACTIVITIES

- Development of regional plan and work programme
- Support for collaborative working and networking
- Professional learning
- Sharing of good practice

- Support peer review of plans and stretch aims
- Support and challenge schools in pursuit of stretch aims
- Tracking, monitoring and data analysis tools
- Professional learning around planning, interventions and approaches
- Collaborating with services, communities and all stakeholders
- Development of local authority wide approaches
- Targeted investment in funding
- Active monitoring of plans and reporting on progress

- Data sharing
- Partnership agreements
- Joined up working

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Leadership
Actively developing empowered leadership capabilities in the education system with embedded structures in place to improve learning, teaching and self-evaluation.

Professional learning
All practitioners engage in professional learning with a focus on equity and reducing poverty related attainment gap.

Collaboration
Established collaborations with local authorities, schools, the third sector and families and communities identifying key priorities across education delivery.

Data and evidence
Practitioners are able to use data effectively to identify the needs of their learners and improve learning and teaching.

Shared understanding
There is shared understanding and shared work amongst all local authorities, practitioners and partners on the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims/mission.

Focus
Sustained focus on physical and mental health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy using pedagogical skills to improve personal achievement, attainment, and positive destinations for children and young people living in poverty.

Readiness to learn
A sustained focus on children and young people's readiness to learn through focusing on engagement and attendance, confidence and wellbeing.

Engagement
Meaningful engagement with children and young people and their families and communities embedded in decision making in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

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MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES

Leadership
Strong leadership in the education system, using skills developed through continuous professional learning focused on equity and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

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Strategic collaboration across the education system results in innovative, impactful and sustainable approaches to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Data and evidence
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Readiness to learn
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Engagement
Embedded engagement and participation of children and young people, families and communities in the learner journey.

Approaches
Evidence based approaches embedded in the system with continuous refinement/adaptation based on effective interventions in the local context.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Closing the gap
Closing of the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people, in line with stretch aims.

Embedded practices
An embedded culture focused on equity continuously supporting and developing practice at all levels of the system addressing impacts of the poverty related attainment gap.

Educational outcomes
Children and young people have rights to equality of opportunity to positive and excellent educational outcomes regardless of their background.

Education system
An education system which actively addresses poverty, removing barriers through inclusive ethos, practice and approaches for children and young people, parents and carers and practitioners.

Achievement
An education system which encourages, reflects, and values the breadth of achievements that contribute to improved outcomes for children.

Key Resources
- National Improvement Hub
- Equity Toolkit
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VISION

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Assumptions
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MISSION

To use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap to deliver on the Government's vision of equity and excellence in education.

Contextual factors

Impact of Covid	Increase in cost of living/poverty	Education Reform	Changes in funding models	Parent/Carer/Family engagement	Political change
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Tackling the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap – Our Theory of Change
The Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model – National Level

INPUTS | ACTIVITIES

Scottish Government
- Responsible for development and implementation of the administration's policies
- Accountable to Parliament
- Set policy framework for SAC
- Distribution of funding to local authorities and schools
- Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation
- Ensure alignment with related policies
- Governance
- Guidance

Education Scotland
- Support and challenge local authorities to develop ambitious stretch aims
- Utilise data to explore a shared understanding of local context and priorities
- Support robust local self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Professional advice and support to local authorities to support effective collaboration
- Support to identify and monitor interventions and approaches
- Gather evidence on what is working well and what further development is needed
- Professional advice and support to ensure effective use of Attainment Scotland Funding

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Leadership
Actively developing empowered leadership capabilities in the education system with embedded structures in place to improve learning, teaching and self-evaluation.

Professional learning
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Collaboration
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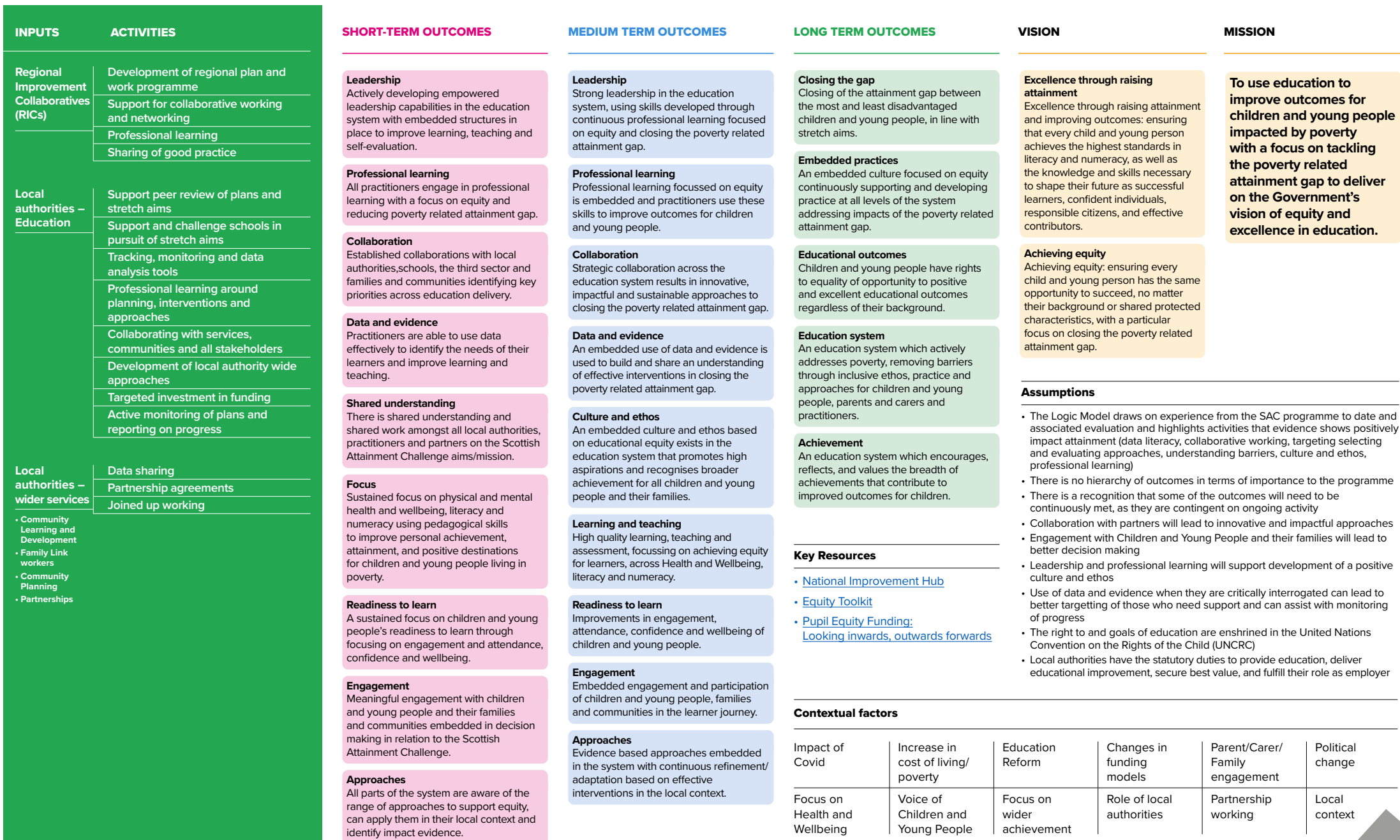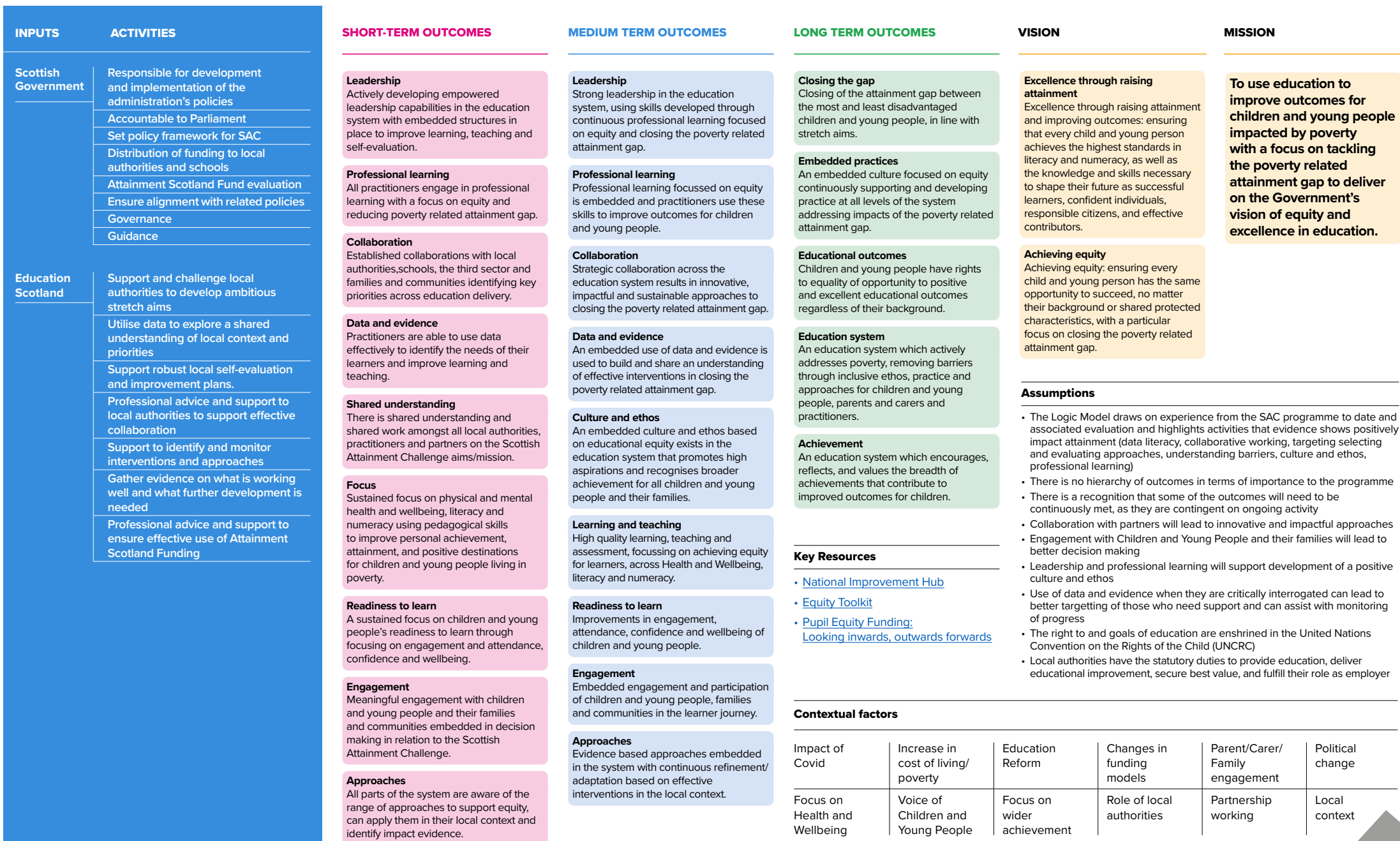
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Contextual factors

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