



Education Scotland's Annual Action Plan 2024-25: 're-focus through reform'

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

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1. Introduction: Gillian Hamilton, Chief Executive, Education Scotland

This plan, which is my first as interim Chief Executive of Education Scotland, is published at a crucial time for Scotland's education system and sets out how Education Scotland will 're-focus through reform' as an enabler of excellence and equity in Scotland's education system, working effectively with partners and stakeholders for the benefit of the people in Scotland's schools and other educational settings. This plan is consistent with the expectations of reform and the existing accountability framework for Education Scotland, including the Inspection function, until the date upon which the Inspectorate becomes an independent body.

This plan – together with the Financial Strategy - extends the Education Scotland corporate planning cycle by a further reporting year (2024-25). We anticipate publishing an Annual Action Plan and updated Financial Strategy for the next reporting year (2025-26) to provide staff and stakeholders with a touchstone for the effective and agile management of the next stage of the reform period and any associated in-year changes in accountabilities and priorities. A more detailed explanation of the corporate planning, performance and financial planning cycles is provided below. This plan builds on Education Scotland's achievements in recent years, sets out Key Actions against our Strategic Priorities, and pivots Education Scotland towards four (4) 're-focus through reform' areas: 1. the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), 2. Professional Learning and Leadership, 3. A re-focused Scottish Attainment Challenge and 4. Inspection. The content of the plan illustrates our commitment to Inclusion, Wellbeing, Equity and Equality and to meeting our wider obligations as a public body, through effective governance arrangements and working effectively with key stakeholders, especially local government. This is in recognition of our contribution to eradicating child poverty and the performance of the wider education system.

I am excited by the challenges and opportunities we are responding to, and I am proud of the progress we are making and the changes to how we work, against the backdrop of reform: from the focus on Maths and Numeracy, English and Literacy as part of the CIC, to our work on supporting improvement in attendance, positive relationships and behaviour; from a high quality national professional learning offer for leadership and learning to development of Corporate Services. Underpinning delivery is our most important asset: our people. It is our people who work hard every day to make the difference, to bring support and resources closer to the work of educators, to ensure our work responds to the needs of people working in early learning and childcare settings, schools, and other educational contexts such as further education and community learning and development. This plan commits to improving the health and wellbeing of our people, by implementing the 35-hour working week.

Taken together, this plan illustrates that Education Scotland plays a distinctive and important role in Scotland's education system that belies the 0.1% of Scotland's Education budget that we are accountable for. Our re-focused role, enabling equity and excellence in education in Scotland, has a reach and impact that goes well beyond the balance sheet, and I look forward to driving forward the next stages of reform and improvement.



Gillian Hamilton
Chief Executive, Education Scotland

2. Education Scotland Annual Action Plan 2024-25: A summary

Strategic Intent	Education Scotland will 're-focus through reform', as an enabler of excellence and equity in Scotland's education system
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6 x Strategic Priorities	System Leadership	Curriculum	Learning, Teaching, Assessment	Inclusion, Wellbeing, Equity, Equality	Best Use of Evidence	Transition, Transformation
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4 x 're-focus through reform' areas	Curriculum Improvement Cycle To work with partners to strengthen curriculum design, delivery and improvement (including beginning the review of the Scottish Curriculum); and ensure the use of highly effective curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment practice is clearly defined and understood in local contexts.	Professional Learning and Leadership To improve collective action on complex, systemic issues to ensure educators are able to lead effectively in complex circumstances.	Scottish Attainment Challenge To use more data and evidence-informed approaches, working with key partners, to tackle poverty related attainment gaps.	Inspection To provide external evaluation of quality and standards of education provision in Scotland, building capacity and informing policy.
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16 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), representing organisational performance directly attributed to Education Scotland	6 National Improvement Framework Drivers (NIFDs) – Key measures, indicating how our key actions contribute to the Education System
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OUR PEOPLE: our **people** are our most important asset and are at the centre of the delivery of this plan

Enablers of success: core functions that must be in place to enable excellence and equity for all Scottish learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, development and support • Effective leadership • Data, evidence and information management • Digital systems • Physical estate and sustainability • Key business functions and systems (e.g. finance, procurement, legal, HR, internal and external communications, governance, risk and planning) • Workforce planning
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Values: our values underpin the way we work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Integrity • Creativity • Excellence
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3. Who we are

Education Scotland is a Scottish Government Executive Agency charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education, securing the delivery of better learning experiences and outcomes for Scottish learners of all ages. As an Executive Agency, Education Scotland operates impartially while remaining directly accountable to the Scottish Ministers for its performance and use of public funds. This status safeguards the independence of inspection, review and reporting within the overall context of the National Performance Framework.

Education Scotland's Chief Executive is responsible to Scottish Ministers, within the terms of the Agency's [framework](#) document, for its management, performance, and future development. The Framework document sets out the Chief Executive's relationship with the Director-General Education and Justice, who acts as the 'Fraser Figure', ensuring alignment of the agency's strategy and activities with Minister's objectives and the broader expectations and requirements of Scottish Government.

HM Chief Inspector of Education

In November 2023, Scottish Government appointed His Majesty's interim Chief Inspector of Education, distinct to the Chief Executive of Education Scotland. Reporting to the Chief Executive of Education Scotland, the Chief Inspector provides strategic leadership to the current Inspection function within the organisation, enabling it to deliver on behalf of Ministers and maintaining the integrity of inspection as a constructive, evidence-led process, independent of the main interests. HM Chief Inspector, whilst a member of the senior management of Education Scotland, is acknowledged by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, the Director-General Education and Justice, and the Chief Executive as being accountable for the current Inspection function within the organisation. Therefore, this Annual Action Plan includes a separate plan setting out the priorities and the key actions specific to the Inspectorate.

Background

Education Scotland was established on 1 July 2011 by the then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. Since then, the launch of 'Education Governance: Next Steps - Empowering Our Teachers, Parents and Communities to Delivery Excellence and Equity for Our Children' in June 2017 set out a significantly enhanced role and purpose for Education Scotland. This included a move to regional working, giving the Agency a strengthened scrutiny and Inspection function and a renewed focus on professional learning and leadership, providing clarity and coherence to the regional and national landscape.

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) [report](#) was published in June 2021. The Scottish Government's response to the recommendations of that report included a clear commitment to reform both Education Scotland and replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Our most important asset: our people

Education Scotland had 390 employees as of 30 June 2024. At that time the number of Education Scotland employees based on full time equivalent was 376.94.

Organisational structure

In February 2024 we aligned our structure behind national education priorities including key work on Scotland's curriculum, and to accelerate progress with closing the attainment gap as well as support for improvement in attendance and behaviour. Currently, Education Scotland is

made up of one organisation, with two distinct functions: support and improvement and inspection, until the date at which the Inspectorate becomes an independent body.

Community Learning and Development Standards Council (CLDSC)

The CLDSC is a practitioner led registration body, hosted by Education Scotland. The administration of CLDSC is by civil servants.

The Council's strategic aims and objectives, which are set and agreed by the Scottish Ministers, are to:

- Deliver a professional approvals structure for qualifications, courses and professional learning opportunities for everyone involved in CLD.
- Maintain and develop a registration system, available to practitioners delivering and active in CLD practice.
- Develop and maintain models of continuing professional learning and training opportunities for CLD practitioners.
- Improve and develop our organisational capability.
- Collaborate and contribute to relevant CLD policy and workforce development information.

There is a [framework agreement](#) in place between Education Scotland and CLDSC.

The Registrar of Independent Schools

The Registrar of Independent Schools is located within Education Scotland. The Registrar's role is as follows:

- To maintain a publicly available register of independent schools (online at: [Independent schools in Scotland: register - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/independent-schools/register)).
- Administer applications to register new independent schools, or applications to amend the registration of existing schools.
- Support the development and implementation of government policy in relation to independent schools.
- Liaise with both Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate (and other bodies as appropriate) to understand inspection outcomes and gather intelligence which may be relevant to the Scottish Ministers.
- Provide advice to the Scottish Ministers in relation to the independent schools' sector (in particular, where related to the Scottish Ministers' regulatory functions over the independent schools' sector as set out in Part V of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended).

4. Education Scotland Annual Action Plan 2024-25

Over this reporting year, Education Scotland will 're-focus through reform' as an enabler of excellence and equity across Scotland's education system. In 2024-25, we will pivot towards four (4) 're-focus through reform' areas: Curriculum Improvement Cycle, Professional Learning and Leadership, a re-focused Scottish Attainment Challenge and Inspection. We retain the Strategic Priorities from the existing Corporate Planning Cycle and align our 're-focus through reform' areas and associated key actions to these. All Strategic Priorities are interconnected and should be viewed holistically rather than as discrete or separate activities. This plan fully recognises that Education Scotland cannot deliver on its own and must work effectively alongside stakeholders, partners and networks to achieve excellence and equity for Scotland's learners.

The Annual Action Plan below sets out:

- **key actions** plotted against **six (6) Strategic Priorities** from the existing Corporate Plan, including the pivot to **four (4) 're-focus through reform' areas**.
- a proportionate range of **KPIs** which are directly attributable to Education Scotland.
- alignment with **NIFDs** which illustrate Education Scotland's contribution to Scotland's education system.
- the lead Strategic Director (SD) and senior leader for each Strategic Priority.

Strategic Priority: System Leadership

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Learning and Leadership
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will design and deliver cohort based national leadership professional learning programmes for educator leadership, middle leadership and system leadership by Q4, continually updating and refreshing based on learning and evaluation. We will design and deliver bespoke 'leadership for equity' support across 32 local authorities to close the poverty related attainment gap, by Q4. We will support bespoke continuous improvement on leadership, professional learning, teaching and assessment, meeting learning needs and curriculum consistent with expectations of reform across 32 local authorities, by Q4. We will work with local authorities on Collaborative Improvement activities, using self-evaluation to help identify system strengths and requirements which will be built into our planning going forward, by Q4
KPIs ('attribution')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities reporting increased awareness, understanding, knowledge and skills. The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities reporting they are likely to implement system leadership learning in practice.
NIFDs ('contribution')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School and ELC leadership Teacher and practitioner professionalism School and ELC improvement
Education Scotland leads	SD: Dave Gregory Extended Leadership Team (ELT): David Burgess

Strategic Priority: Curriculum (CIC)

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Improvement Cycle
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will deliver the curriculum design professional learning programme by Q4. • We will work with curriculum co-design groups for core curriculum competencies, interdisciplinary learning, profiling achievement, time-tabling, learner pathways, by Q4. • We will commence Curriculum Area Reviews as part of Curriculum Improvement Cycle, by Q4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ for Maths and Numeracy (Q2) ○ for English and Literacy (Q3) ○ for Gaelic and Literacy (Q4) ○ for Science (Q4) ○ for Health and Wellbeing (Q4). • We will develop and implement an enhanced leadership professional learning offer for early learning and childcare (ELC) practitioners across all local authorities, by Q4.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities focused on curriculum design and development reporting increased awareness, understanding, knowledge and skills. • The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities reporting they are likely to implement curriculum design and development learning in practice.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership • Teacher and practitioner professionalism • Curriculum and assessment • School and ELC improvement
Education Scotland leads	SD: Ollie Bray ELT: Joan MacKay, Andy Creamer

Strategic Priority: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA)

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Learning and Leadership Curriculum Improvement Cycle
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will agree and implement shared action plans with up to five local authorities to build capacity and improve outcomes for learners, by Q4. We will deliver three 'thematic weeks' on digital learning and teaching, covering 'digital literacy week', 'computing science week' and 'AI in schools', by Q4. We will work with local authorities to develop options for the future of Glow (the national digital learning and teaching platform), to be underway by Q4. We will continue to evolve the existing Glow service, working with local authorities. This will include a focus on AI tools, piloting in schools by Q3, national rollout by Q4.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities reporting higher levels of implementation of learning in practice. The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities reporting increased awareness, understanding, knowledge and skills.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School and ELC leadership Teacher and practitioner professionalism Curriculum and assessment
Education Scotland leads	SD: Ollie Bray ELT: Andy Creamer, Patricia Dougan

Strategic Priority: Inclusion, Wellbeing, Equity and Equality (IWEE)

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Attainment Challenge • Professional Learning and Leadership
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will implement and promote the 'Inclusion, Wellbeing, Equalities' professional learning framework, to support educators to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people who require additional support, by Q4. • We will implement an evidence based, support programme for educators to improve relationships, and improve attendance and behaviour, by Q4. • We will co-deliver the Scottish Attainment Challenge Programme with national and local government, schools, parents, communities (including CLD), learners and families, through an evidence-based, flexible and proportionate capacity-building approach, by Q4.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities who report increased awareness, understanding, knowledge and skills in relation to inclusion, wellbeing, equity and equalities. • The proportion of participants involved in professional learning and improvement support opportunities who indicate they are likely to implement the learning.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership • Teacher and practitioner professionalism • Parent/carer engagement and family learning
Education Scotland leads	<p>SD: Dave Gregory ELT: Laura-Ann Currie</p>

Strategic Priority: Best use of Evidence (BE)

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Improvement Cycle • Professional Learning and Leadership • Scottish Attainment Challenge
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a research and evaluation programme in support of a more evidence-based approach to developing practice and improving outcomes for learners, by Q4. • We will assess cross-sector collaboration opportunities with national and local government, health and academia (collective use of data and evidence to improve outcomes, analysing and disseminating findings of best practice from inspection activity, share learning) to inform improvement against refreshed National Improvement Framework priorities, by Q4.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of participants in the Self-evaluation for continuous improvement (SECI) programme who report increased confidence, knowledge and skills . • The percentage of headteachers / heads of setting who report that the professional dialogue with HM Inspectors during the inspection has helped the school / setting to make improvements.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership • School and ELC improvement • Performance information
Education Scotland leads	SD: Rob Strachan ELT: Jacqui Ward

Strategic Priority: Transition and Transformation (TT)

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Improvement Cycle • Professional Learning and Leadership • Scottish Attainment Challenge
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will improve staff wellbeing through the introduction of the 35-hour working week, by Q3. • We will support the implementation of the Oracle system, as part of wider public service reform, by Q2. • We will develop and implement a Professional Learning Strategy in support of all our people, recognising Education Scotland as a 'learning organisation', by Q4. • We will refresh our approach to engagement and voice, identifying areas for improvement, in line with UNCRC incorporation, by Q4. • We will actively contribute to the Scottish Government Education Reform Programme, to inform and support a re-focused Education Scotland (ongoing).
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of staff turnover and retention. • The percentage of Education Scotland staff reporting that they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities when they need to. • The percentage of Education Scotland staff reporting they feel supported and ready for change.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership • Teacher and practitioner professionalism • Curriculum and assessment • School and ELC improvement • Performance information
Education Scotland leads	SD: Rob Strachan ELT: Lesley Whelan

5. Introduction: Janie McManus, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education for Scotland

This plan represents a pivotal moment in my tenure as interim His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education. As my first plan in this role, it is published at a crucial time for Scotland's education system, and I am honoured to lead the Inspectorate through this transformative period. The plan will guide us through the transition from Education Scotland to the independent, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education for Scotland. The plan is pivotal in ensuring the continued quality of education for all learners across the country through rigorous inspection and dedicated support for continuous improvement. It not only sets out our strategic direction but also reflects our deep commitment to ensuring that every learner in Scotland has access to the highest quality of education.

I have high ambitions for the Inspectorate. Inspection is not merely about accountability; it's about driving significant improvement. We strive to be more than assessors; we aim to be catalysts for positive change across Scotland's education system. Our inspectorate aspires to be an influential voice, advocating for practices that genuinely enhance the learning experience for every child, young person and adult learner.

Our annual inspection programme is at the heart of our work, highlighting what is working well and identifying areas where improvement is needed. Through these efforts, we play a critical role in enhancing the quality of education across Scotland. But our work extends beyond inspections; it is about building lasting, meaningful relationships with our stakeholders, particularly with children and young people, whose voices are central to the positive changes we seek to inspire.

We want the outcomes of our work to be recognised and valued across the educational landscape. We want educators to feel supported, to learn from our inspections, and to be motivated by the examples of success we identify.

As we move forward, we will review and update our inspection frameworks and models, ensuring they are both effective and efficient, and reflect the ongoing work of the Scottish Government's Education Reform programme. This work is vital to ensuring a smooth and successful transition to the independent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education for Scotland.

In these times of rapid change and significant challenges, I am deeply committed to supporting and motivating our staff. We will invest in their development, nurturing the skills and confidence needed to excel in their roles and contribute to the establishment of a highly respected and effective inspectorate.

This plan is incorporated as part of the Education Scotland Annual Action Plan, and associated Financial Strategy, in line with the current accountability framework and consistent with existing obligations placed upon me as HM Chief Inspector and I look forward to the challenges ahead, this reporting year and as we move through the reform process.



Janie McManus
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education for Scotland

6. His Majesty's Inspector of Education for Scotland: Annual Action Plan

Throughout this period of reform, we remain dedicated in our commitment to the following Strategic Priorities:

- **Provide accountability and assurance on the quality of Scottish education:** Our role in providing accountability and assurance for the quality of Scottish education is one we take with the utmost seriousness. We are committed to ensuring that every inspection upholds the highest standards, benefiting all learners.
- **Support education providers to improve through building capacity and sharing effective practice:** Our approach extends beyond evaluation. We strive to be partners in improvement and build capacity, offering guidance, sharing best practices, and promoting self-evaluation for self-improvement.
- **Use our evidence to inform the development of educational policy and practice:** With a deep belief in the power of evidence, we are committed to using our findings to shape and inform educational policy and practice, ensuring that our insights lead to meaningful, positive change.
- **Investing in our people:** Our team is our greatest asset. We are committed to fostering a work environment that encourages growth, innovation, and resilience.

Strategic Priority: Provide accountability and assurance on the quality of Scottish education

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will carry out our published annual programme of inspections. • We will safeguard and protect the rights of children by maintaining rigorous oversight and implementing measures that promote safeguarding and child protection. • We will produce sectoral and national overview reports to provide insights and recommendations that drive improvement across the education sector. • We will develop and implement a new framework and models for shared inspections in Early Learning and Childcare, including with the Care Inspectorate. • We will review and develop school inspection frameworks and models. • We will develop a new framework for the inspection of local authorities. • We will deliver on the outcome agreement with the Scottish Funding Council.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of planned inspections carried out. • The percentage of inspection reports published within timescale each academic year. • The percentage of inspection findings documents published at the same time as the report • The percentage of headteachers / heads of setting who report that the professional dialogue with HM Inspectors during the inspection has helped the school / setting to make improvements. • The percentage of Education Scotland (Inspectorate) staff reporting they feel supported and ready for change.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership • Curriculum and assessment • School and ELC improvement • Performance information
Inspectorate leads	<p>SD: Patricia Watson, Gill Ritchie Inspectorate Leadership Team (ILT): Heads of Inspection, Senior Inspectors, Head of Inspection Support, Heads of Inspection Strategy</p>

Strategic Priority: Support education providers to improve through building capacity and sharing effective practice

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will communicate findings and evidence effectively and regularly. • We will identify and share effective practices from our inspection and thematic work. • We will develop the role of Associate Assessors to enhance their contribution in supporting system-wide improvement.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of examples of effective practice identified and published. • The percentage of school inspections each academic year which involve an Associate Assessor. • The percentage of inspected school headteachers / heads of early learning and childcare settings who agree that the inspection has provided the establishment with a clear agenda for change. • The percentage of Associate Assessors who report that the experience they have developed in this role is utilised within their organisation.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership • Teacher and practitioner professionalism • Curriculum and assessment • School and ELC improvement • Performance information
Inspectorate leads	SD: Patricia Watson, Gill Ritchie ILT: Heads of Inspection, Senior Inspectors, Head of Inspection Support, Heads of Inspection Strategy

Strategic Priority: Use our evidence to inform the development of educational policy and practice

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will contribute to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle. • We will respond to Scottish Government actions related to independent reviews and new legislation. • We will develop a knowledge management strategy to enhance our ability to capture, share, and use our evidence. • We will develop thematic, sectoral and national overview reports.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of headteachers / heads of setting who report that the professional dialogue with HM Inspectors during the inspection has helped the school / setting to make improvements. • The percentage of inspected school headteachers / heads of early learning and childcare settings each academic year who agree that the inspection has provided the establishment with a clear agenda for change. • The percentage of inspected school headteachers / heads of early learning and childcare settings each academic year who agree that the establishment made changes as a direct result of the inspection.
NIFDs 'contribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership • Curriculum and assessment • School and ELC improvement • Performance information
Inspectorate leads	SD: Patricia Watson, Gill Ritchie ILT: Heads of Inspection, Senior Inspectors, Head of Inspection Support, Heads of Inspection Strategy

Strategic Priority Investing in our people

're-focus through reform' area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection
Key actions 2024 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will implement a new professional learning strategy for Inspectorate staff, aligned to organisation wide activity. • We will transition to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in a manner that allows us to effectively deliver the functions of the inspectorate while meeting the needs of our workforce.
KPIs 'attribution'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of Inspectorate staff reporting that they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities when they need to. • The percentage of Inspectorate staff reporting they feel supported and ready for change.
Inspectorate leads	SD: Gill Ritchie ILT: Senior Inspectors, Head of Inspection Strategy

7. Education Scotland's corporate planning, performance, and financial planning cycle: before, during and after reform

It is important that this plan clearly explains Education Scotland's corporate planning, performance, and financial planning cycle for the periods before, during and after reform. This is set out as follows:

- 2021-22: Education Scotland published a five-year Corporate Plan which set out how Education Scotland would continue to work towards a vision of achieving excellence and equity for Scotland's learners, in partnership with Scotland's educators.
- 2022–24: Education Scotland published an updated Corporate Plan aligned to reform timelines set at that time and interpret national expectations following the [Scottish Government's response](#) to Professor Ken Muir's review of Scotland's education system¹.
- 2024–25: Education Scotland extends 2022 – 24 Corporate Planning period by further reporting year through publication of Annual Action Plan 2024-25, retaining Strategic Priorities, updating the key actions and highlighting the pivot towards a re-focused Education Scotland. Education Scotland Financial Strategy 2024–25 published in tandem with Annual Action Plan. This Annual Action Plan reflects the Accountability Framework, sets out a proportionate set of KPIs and aligns with the National Improvement Framework (NIF). This Annual Action Plan 2024–25 recognises 'Inspection' as a 're-focus through reform' area, supports the shift to an independent Inspectorate (HMIE(S)) and sets out a distinctive set of key actions for the Chief Inspector.
- 2025–26: Education Scotland intention to extend Corporate Planning period by a further reporting year through publication of Education Scotland Annual Action Plan 2025–26 and Education Scotland Financial Strategy 2025–26. Iterative improvements to KPIs made and alignment with NIF retained. This Annual Action Plan and Financial Strategy will cover the most intensive period of reform and will enable an effectively managed divergence of Education Scotland and HMIE(S) accountability arrangements through good planning and reporting within the reporting year, recognising the break point in accountability between Education Scotland's Chief Executive and HMIE(S) Chief Inspector.
- In tandem with the reform process, Education Scotland will develop an evidence based Corporate Plan for the longer term (2026/27–2031/32) which integrates the re-focused Education Scotland Corporate Plan and Financial Strategy into a single Organisational Strategy. Similarly, HMIE(S) will develop a longer term, evidence based Corporate Plan for the new Inspection body.
- 2026/27–2031/32: Education Scotland Corporate Plan (publication date tbc) - which integrates organisational and financial strategy - setting out clear priorities, resourcing, delivery and performance arrangements for these, including KPIs and NIF alignment.

¹ Muir, K. B. (2022). *Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education: Report*. Scottish Government.

Education Scotland's reporting cycle follows the financial year rather than the school year. This enables Education Scotland to meet its public body obligations, including alignment of finance and performance: Quarter 1 (April - June), Quarter 2 (July – September), Quarter 3 (October – December), and Quarter 4 (January – March). This reporting cycle differs from the school year so we will continue to increase awareness of what reporting period each quarter represents.

8. Resources

The Resource budget for Education Scotland in 2024 – 25 is over £40 million, made up of core budget plus resources allocated in support of national priorities. This represents approximately 0.1% of the Education Budget in Scotland.

This resource budget covers staffing costs, contracts with external providers, digital, buildings and energy, and a range of administration costs as well as some grants for external bodies. As is the case across Scottish Government, our budget is, and will continue to be, under significant pressure due to several inter-related challenges that, when taken together, reduce the level of available resources for programme and project activities. Consequently, this plan makes a clear commitment to pivot resources behind four (4) ‘re-focus through reform’ areas. In doing so, we are clear about the things that we will pay most attention to.

While we remain committed to delivering a wider set of actions across the organisation, beyond those articulated in this plan, we are clear that their delivery will not be at the expense of these ‘re-focus through reform’ areas and our distinctive role as an enabler of equity and excellence in education in Scotland. We will look to deliver reform through this plan and existing resourcing arrangements as far as practicable, recognising that priorities and accountabilities will change in the course of this reporting year and / or the next which may bring resourcing implications.

Longer term, organisational and financial strategy will integrate as part of longer-term corporate planning arrangements, as set out in Section 7 above.

9. Measuring and monitoring our progress

In this plan, we set out the key actions that we will focus our attention on this year. This plan is complemented by plans within Education Scotland Directorates and Teams. Management of the Annual Action Plan is undertaken by the Leadership Team (LT) and monitored by our Advisory Board (AB). Within Directorates and Teams, more consistent monitoring practices are being introduced.

Strategically significant pieces of work – as well as linkages across priorities and actions – are overseen by the Support and Improvement Board (SIB), the Inspectorate Board, and the Corporate Services and Governance (CS&G) and Digital Boards.

Education Scotland has a set of organisational KPIs to monitor performance and this plan aligns the KPIs with the Strategic Priorities. The KPIs highlight areas of organisational performance directly attributed to Education Scotland ('attribution'). National Improvement Framework Drivers (NIFDs) are aligned with Strategic Priorities. The NIFDs highlight areas of system performance that Education Scotland contributes to, reflecting our distinctive role in Scotland's wider education system ('contribution').

Moving forward, we will look to continually improve qualitative and quantitative measures of success and capture not just the work we are doing, but how that work is experienced and the impact it has. We will report against the key actions set out in this plan on a quarterly basis to the LT, AB and Scottish Ministers and will continue to integrate and improve organisational planning, reporting and monitoring arrangements.

Education Scotland

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330
E enquiries@educationscotland.gov.scot

<https://education.gov.scot>

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