



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

**11th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5)**

**Wednesday 18 April 2018**

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in the Robert Burns Room (CR1).

1. **Decision to take agenda items in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take agenda items 3 and 4 in private. The Committee will also decide whether to take future reviews of the evidence on its Attainment and Achievement of School Aged Children Experiencing Poverty inquiry in private.
2. **Attainment and Achievement of School Aged Children Experiencing Poverty:** The Committee will hear evidence on its inquiry from—  
  
John Dickie, Director, Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland;  
  
Kevin Lowden, Research Officer, Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change;  
  
Danielle Mason, Head of Research, Education Endowment Foundation;  
and  
  
Dr Jim McCormick, Associate Director Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
3. **Review of evidence:** The Committee will consider the evidence it heard earlier.
4. **Work programme:** The Committee will consider its work programme.

Roz Thomson  
Clerk to the Education and Skills Committee  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
Tel: 85222  
Email: Roz.Thomson@parliament.scot

The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda Item 2**

SPICe Briefing Paper ES/S5/18/11/1

Witness Submissions Pack ES/S5/18/11/2

Additional Submissions Pack ES/S5/18/11/3

**Agenda Item 4**

Work programme (private paper) ES/S5/18/11/4

**EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE**

**11th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5), Wednesday, 18 April 2018**  
**Education and Skills Committee**

**Impact of Poverty on School Attainment and Achievement****INTRODUCTION**

The first part of this paper provides suggested themes for discussion with witnesses on 18<sup>th</sup> April. It then provides a short overview of the attainment gap and the relevant policy and legislative context before summarising key themes from the submissions received by the Committee for this inquiry.

**SUGGESTED THEMES FOR DISCUSSION**

The Committee will hear from:

- John Dickie, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)
- Danielle Mason, Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)
- Kevin Lowden, Robert Owen Centre
- Jim McCormick, JRF

Submissions have been received from all of the witnesses and are reproduced in Paper 2. The full pack of submissions is available on the [Committee's website](#).

The Committee heard from Danielle Mason (EEF) [on 6 December](#) and Professor Chris Chapman of the Robert Owen Centre on [29 November](#) as part of its pre-legislative scrutiny of the education reform proposals. This included discussion of the importance of the evidence base when seeking to implement change. The Committee also discussed attainment on [14 September 2016](#) which covered issues including the education reform proposals and the attainment challenge. At that meeting the Committee heard from; a head teacher, Dundee City Council, Education Scotland, NPFS and John Swinney.

**Theme 1. Type of interventions required**

The EEF has produced a Scottish version of their teaching and learning toolkit which summarises the evidence base for different interventions. In their submission, the EEF include a diagram of the most cost effective approaches and note that:

“relative to other strategies, efforts to improve the quality of pedagogy appear to be the most cost effective ways of achieving improvements in attainment outcomes. By contrast, approaches that focus on the school structure, such as school uniform, reducing class sizes and performance pay, are less cost effective.”

The submission from the Robert Owen Centre describes how:

“teacher quality/effectiveness has been shown to be a crucial element in promoting positive educational outcomes irrespective of social/economic background [...] in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, ‘at risk’ students learn at the same rate as those from advantaged backgrounds.”

and that:

“effective learning strategies to tackle education inequity include: high quality feedback to pupils; peer tutoring; developing thinking skills (meta-cognition) and a focus on early years.”

The submission from the Education Endowment Foundation refers to:

“improving the quality of teaching is likely to have a disproportionately positive impact on children from low-income families and that the quality of teaching is generally lower in schools serving disadvantaged areas.”

In their submission, CRER note the high attainment of pupils from some BME backgrounds despite, in general, greater levels of disadvantage.

The evaluation of the first two years of the Attainment Challenge<sup>1</sup> ([Scottish Government, March 2018](#)) found that most of schools and local authorities had focused on teaching skills or practice most often in relation to literacy.

The report also found that local authorities and schools used a mix of targeted and universal approaches. (Sometimes approaches were universal across a particular school which may have a particularly high proportion of pupils from disadvantaged areas).

**The Committee may wish to discuss:**

- **the particular teaching strategies that impact on the poverty related attainment gap, compared to those that seek to narrow differences in attainment in general**
- **whether it is important to consider the specific mechanisms by which poverty impacts on attainment when thinking about how to close the gap**
- **what can be learnt from high attaining children from disadvantaged backgrounds about how to address the poverty related attainment gap**

## **Theme 2. Cost of the school day**

A strong theme throughout the submissions is the financial barriers which impact on participation in school education, which in turn can impact on attainment. In particular, the ‘cost of the school day’ work initiated by CPAG (and now in 20 local authorities) was mentioned frequently.

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<sup>1</sup> This covered 2015-17 and so does not include PEF funding. It covers the Challenge Authorities and schools programme.

While school education is intended to be free, various costs, charges and resource requirements can affect the ability of some pupils to participate. Types of impact include:

- direct costs associated with school – uniform, school meals, school trips, fundraising
- homework/coursework requiring extra resources such as ICT access at home
- costs of practical subjects/field trips/study trips limiting subject choices
- costs of extra-curricular activities / wider-achievement activities (eg Duke of Edinburgh Awards) make this less accessible, and so the benefits to attainment that this can provide are lost

There are already various legislative provisions that should reduce the cost of the school day, including a requirement that local authorities provide education materials free of charge that “are necessary to enable the pupil to take full advantage of the education provided.” (s.11 Education (Scotland) Act 1980). This and the idea of ‘pupil entitlements’ under Curriculum for Excellence, specific provisions to subsidise costs (eg.free school meals/school clothing grants) and more recent requirements to consider how to reduce the attainment gap (Education (Scotland) Act 2016) all suggest a considerable existing legal framework in relation to the cost of the school day. That said, Committee submissions suggest that explicit and implicit costs still have an impact.

Further detail is provided in the summary of submissions and policy context below.

**The Committee may wish to discuss:**

- **the extent to which school education is, in reality, available free of charge and the impact this has on the attainment gap**
- **whether there is action at a national level (policy or legislation) which would impact on the cost of the school day**
- **the potential impact of changing certain established practices, including: structure of school terms, charges for extra-curricular/wider achievement activities, charges for equipment etc for practical subjects and approaches to home work and course work**

**Theme 3. Parental Engagement**

A common theme in submissions is the importance and difficulty of securing parental involvement. Parental involvement can be considered in terms of:

- a parent’s involvement with their own child’s learning, through; for example help with homework, securing additional tuition or discussing their child’s learning with school teachers. Of course a parent may be involved in their child’s education without the school being aware of it.
- a parent’s involvement in the school more generally, such as involvement in the parent council

As discussed in a number of submissions, including from the EEF and the Robert Owen Centre, research suggests that parental engagement is important for closing the attainment gap.

The EEF refer to poor participation in parental engagement projects although note that a more recent 'light touch' project:

“using text messages to communicate the dates of upcoming tests, whether homework was submitted on time and what their children were learning at school [...] found small positive impacts on maths attainment and reducing absenteeism.”

Lack of engagement is not due to lack of aspiration. Research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([Menzies, 2013](#)) challenges the idea that disadvantaged pupils and parents have low aspirations, rather:

“Disadvantaged pupils often have high aspirations. However, they may not know how to achieve them and may struggle to maintain them.”

**The Committee may wish to discuss:**

- **the extent to which it should be the role of the school to encourage parental engagement**
- **how schools or others can make it easier for parents to engage in their child's learning**
- **whether there are school practices that increase a child's reliance on parental involvement (eg. homework policies), and if so, whether these may discriminate against a child whose parents are less able/willing to engage**

#### **Theme 4. Education Reforms**

In their submission the Scottish Government refer to the proposed education reforms as part of the commitment to drive “equity and excellence.” The “central aim” is:

“to empower our teachers, parents and communities to deliver excellence and equity for our children and young people.”

This includes:

- the Head teachers' Charter: “to set out head teachers' rights and responsibilities as leaders of learning and teaching”
- Regional Improvement Collaboratives “to strengthen the support that schools can access in closing the attainment gap”
- improving parental and community engagement in school life and learning
- strengthen the voice of children and young people

The Committee has already undertaken [pre-legislative scrutiny](#) on the Scottish Government's consultation and a bill is expected before the summer.

There was concern in a few submissions about the impact of these reforms. In particular COSLA is concerned to ensure that governance reforms do not weaken the ability of local authorities to use a range of services to take a holistic approach to meeting a child's needs. Includem is concerned that proposals to change education governance will make it more difficult for specialist third sector providers to provide services to schools.

Issues of collaboration and sharing best practice were raised in submissions from witnesses. The submission from the Robert Owen Centre referred to a literature review which “again highlights the importance of school organisation, culture, leadership and ethos” and that:

“school improvement that tackles inequality is much more likely to emerge as a result of collective capacity building across schools than through centrally driven top-down mandates underpinned by accountability mechanisms.”

The EEF suggest that the improvement collaboratives could be used for the purpose of enabling schools to learn from each other:

“if schools are able to self-organise or be supported to organise into groups of common interest, and if leadership of the groups is resourced.”

**The Committee may wish to discuss:**

- **how best to ensure that any Charter and the RICs contribute to closing the attainment gap**
- **whether the reforms will make it easier, more difficult or make little difference to tackling the attainment gap**
- **what teachers and communities require from government in order to close the attainment gap**

**Theme 5. Actions outwith schools**

The submissions from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland are clear that closing the attainment gap cannot be achieved by schools alone. This was also a strong theme in the submissions received by the Committee and tended to have two strands:

- that there should be a focus on reducing child poverty, rather than only on mitigating its impact. The Scottish Government has recently published a ‘Child Poverty Delivery Plan’ (see below) in pursuit of the legislative targets to reduce child poverty.
- that other policy areas contribute to mitigating the impact of poverty on school attainment – eg. family support services, early learning and childcare, youth work and community learning and development

The Attainment Challenge as well as the establishment of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives have a focus on the value of collaboration as the route to successful change. The submission from the Robert Owen Centre states that:

“education collaborations need to extend to include other partners and services beyond education to provide a more holistic approach. [They need to] address issues of pupil wellbeing, enrichment experiences, engaging parents and families in their children’s learning and strengthening links with communities.[...] Therefore, effective multi-agency partnership working is crucial to tackle educational inequity.”

The submission emphasises that measures focused within schools, between schools and beyond schools do not form a hierarchy – all areas must be developed together.

“the success of pulling all parts of this framework together and optimising impact requires clear, consistent, collaborative leadership within and between services.”

**The Committee may wish to discuss:**

- **the particular types of partnerships that are essential for schools to make when aiming to tackle the attainment gap**
- **non-education policy and legislation likely to have the largest impact on the attainment gap**
- **what is required at a national level to ensure a strategic focus on the attainment gap across the broad range of non-education services that can impact on it**

**Theme 6. Measuring progress**

The importance of using data at a school level to track progress and target interventions is raised in the submission from the Robert Owen Centre.

At a national level, attainment data can raise concerns about creating ‘league tables’ rather than being used to drive improvement. The new National Improvement Framework uses teacher judgement information informed by standardised assessments rather than standardised assessments themselves. The first year of results showed wide variation in reported teacher judgements across the country. (See [Scottish Government \(2017\) “Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels”](#)).

At a national level, the Scottish Government has set a ‘basket of measures’ to monitor closing the attainment gap. (See annex). These are a mixture of health and well-being, school attainment and young people’s ‘participation’ in education, training or employment. These measures compare attainment by SIMD, a place based measure.

The Pupil Equity Fund is distributed using free school meal registrations. Both have their flaws – in particular, not everyone in poverty lives in the most deprived SIMD areas. FSM measures registrations not eligibility and even if it did, eligibility may exclude many on low incomes. The Scottish Government’s child poverty targets use different measures again (see further discussion below). The Scottish Government’s education research strategy includes a commitment to develop further measures of deprivation.

The evaluation of the first two years of the Attainment Challenge notes that there is no consistent measure of attainment for primary and early secondary schooling, available at a local level, which pre-dates the attainment fund and which exists throughout its implementation.

“ultimately, without more evidence, at this stage we are unable to conclude the level of impact the fund may have had in raising attainment and closing the poverty related gap.” (para 11.154)

Many submissions referred to the importance of ‘wider achievement’ to young people’s outcomes. The Duke of Edinburgh Awards submission recommended better reporting of non-certificated learning.

The chosen measures also focus on comparing the most and least disadvantaged, however educational attainment increases steadily as area deprivation decreases.



**The Committee may wish to discuss:**

- **whether any of the ‘basket of measures’ in place for monitoring the attainment gap risk creating perverse incentives**
- **given that attainment improves at a steady gradient as income increases, whether it the correct approach to focus particularly on those in the 20% most deprived areas**
- **whether the flaws in using SIMD or FSM are so serious that they undermine the ability to monitor the effect of poverty on school attainment**
- **whether measures of ‘wider achievement’ should be included in the ‘basket of measures’ used to monitor the ‘attainment gap’**
- **in what ways should schools be using attainment data to close the gap, and how does this differ from how it should be used at a national or regional level**
- **whether the lack of some baseline data, particularly for primary and early secondary education will hamper evaluation of the Attainment Challenge**

## **BACKGROUND: POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

This section of the paper provides background context on:

- what the attainment gap is, and how it is measured
- the Attainment Challenge, including evaluation of its first two years
- the Child Poverty Delivery Plan, which includes actions in education and schools policy
- the legal framework including the right to education, legal duties and powers to assist with costs and newer duties to consider the impact of poverty

## **THE ATTAINMENT GAP**

The Scottish Government has a commitment to:

“make demonstrable progress in closing the gap during the lifetime of this Parliament, and to substantially eliminate it in the next decade.”

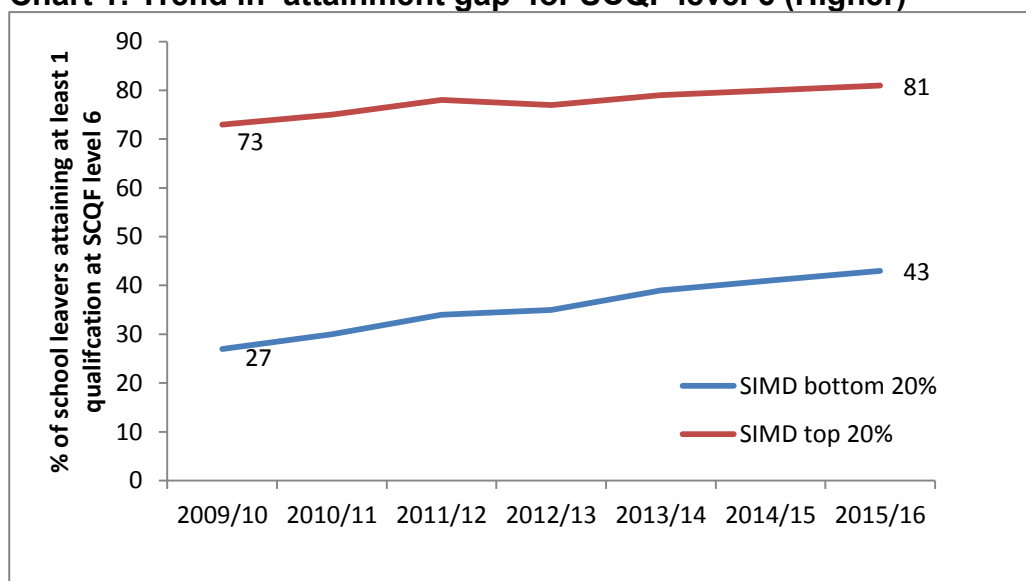
The National Improvement Framework (December 2017) set out a ‘basket’ of measures that will be used to monitor progress towards closing the attainment gap. There are 11 key measures and 15 sub-measures which compare the most disadvantaged (bottom 20% SIMD) and the least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD). They measure aspects of:

- health and wellbeing
- literacy and numeracy in the Broad General Education
- qualifications of school leavers
- participation index (ie whether in education, training or employment)

The table in Annex 1 gives the list of the 11 main measures together with the most recent statistics for the ‘gap.’ The measure with the largest gap is the proportion of school leavers with at least one qualification at SCQF level 6 (Higher). The chart below shows how there

has been some small narrowing of this gap – from a gap of 46 percentage points in 2009/10 to 38 percentage points in 2015/16. The 2016/17 statistics are due in June.

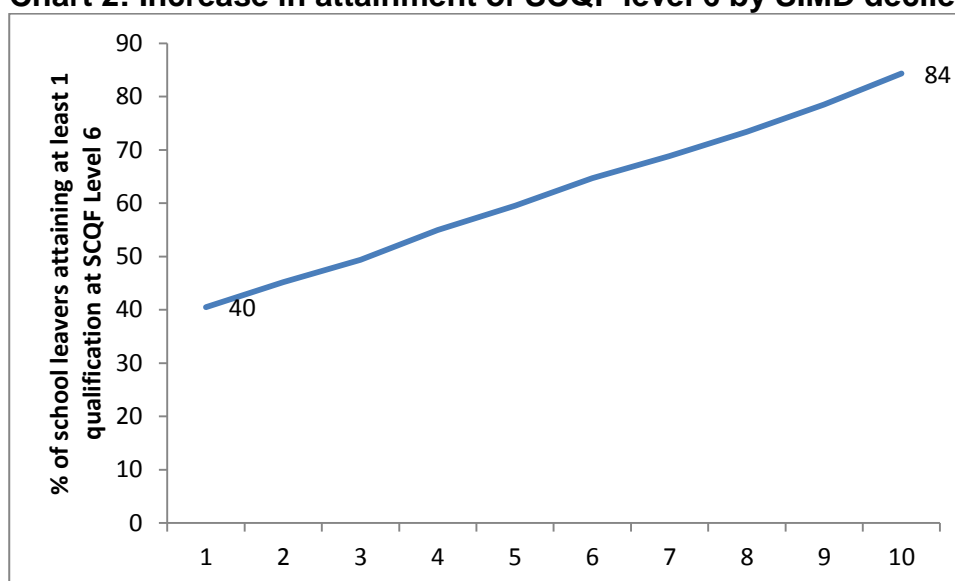
**Chart 1: Trend in 'attainment gap' for SCQF level 6 (Higher)**



source: [Scottish Government Attainment Statistics and destinations of school leavers 2015/16](#). (June 2017)

While these measures compare the bottom and top 20%, it is important to note that the pattern is of steadily increasing qualification levels as deprivation decreases. The chart below shows how the proportion of leavers with at least one 'level 6' qualification increases in each SIMD decile from those living in the most to the least deprived areas.

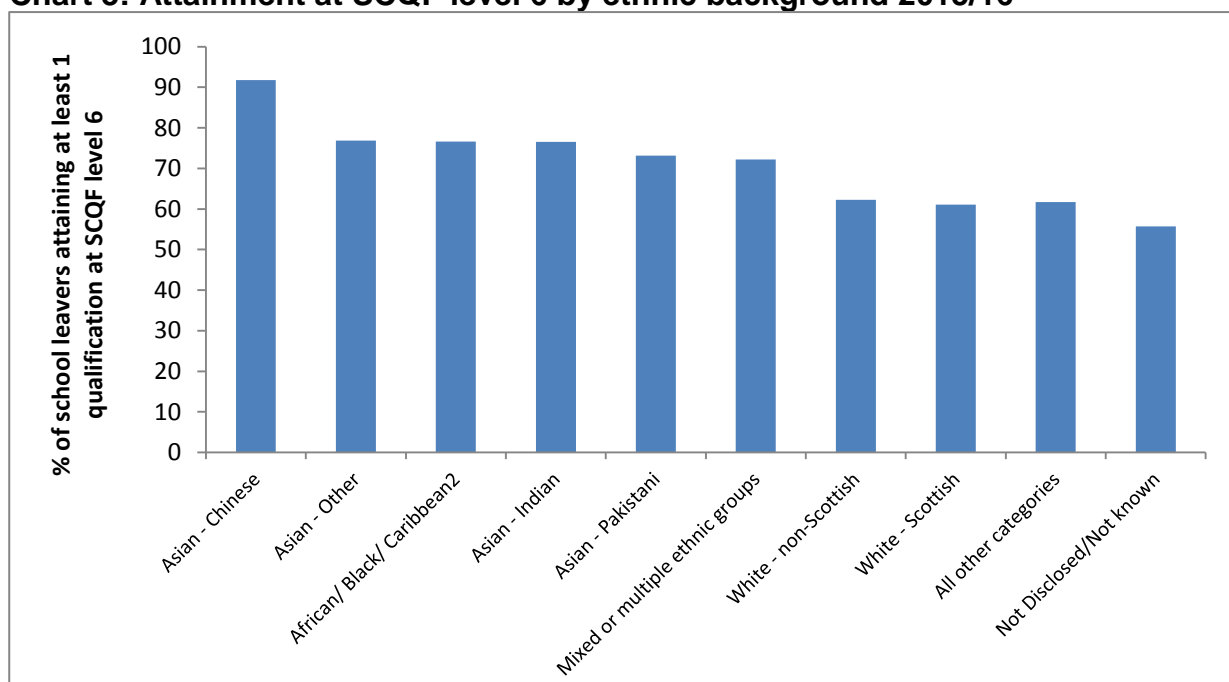
**Chart 2: Increase in attainment of SCQF level 6 by SIMD decile**



source: [Scottish Government Attainment Statistics and destinations of school leavers 2015/16](#). (June 2017)

Submissions from CRER, EHRC and NASUWT emphasised the need to also take account of other inequalities, in particular ethnicity. The chart below shows the attainment of at least one higher in 2015/16 by ethnicity.

**Chart 3: Attainment at SCQF level 6 by ethnic background 2015/16**



source: [Scottish Government Attainment Statistics and destinations of school leavers 2015/16](#). (June 2017)

In their submission CRER, note some issues with the categorisation which masked low attainment in gypsy/traveller and black and Caribbean backgrounds, but go on to state that, in general:

“children from BME backgrounds are significantly more likely to be living in disadvantaged circumstances than white children,[...]There is something particular happening within BME communities that allows children to achieve at school and continue onto positive destinations, despite growing up in poverty. To gather a full picture of the situation, we ask that the committee remember that race plays a role and consider looking further into this issue.”

### Measures of deprivation

SIMD is used to measure the ‘attainment gap’, but is an area based measure (and one which itself includes educational attainment as part of a combined measure). Just under 1 in 3 people living in the 15% most deprived SIMD areas are income deprived ([SIMD introduction](#)). The SIMD income domain is based on benefit claimants. Other domains include employment, health and education.

Another common measure is entitlement to free school meals. PEF funding is allocated according to free school meals registrations up to S3. While this is based on the individual household, it covers specific benefits and will be affected by changes in eligibility for those benefits. There will also be children in households on low incomes that are not entitled to free school meals<sup>2</sup>, and there are children entitled to free school meals who do not register for them. In his book chapter submitted to the Committee Stephen Gorard discusses different measures of deprivation (and the need to take background factors into account when considering attainment). He notes the differences in attainment between those in

<sup>2</sup> In England, the Children’s Society estimated in 2013 that of 1.2 million children living in poverty in England that miss out on a free school meal, 700,000 do so because they are ineligible ([The Guardian, 2013](#)). Eligibility is slightly different in Scotland, in that it allows free school meals for those on maximum working tax credit.

persistent poverty (i.e claiming free school meals over a number of years) and those who may only claim free school meals for a short period of time.

The child poverty targets (discussed below) use household income and availability of certain basic items (such as a warm winter coat) collected through survey data. They also include measures of persistent poverty.

The Scottish Government's education research strategy includes a commitment to develop further measures of deprivation. The [NIF Action Plan 2018](#) stated that the Scottish Government is committed to exploring work on "a study on the long-term development of a bespoke index of social background which will create individual-level (as opposed to area-based) data involving consideration of the data collected at school registration."

### **Other relevant statutory targets and measures**

The statutory targets for reducing child poverty are also relevant to this inquiry. The Scottish Government is also revising its 'National Performance Framework' which covers the entirety of government policy.

#### *The National Performance Framework.*

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on the National Outcomes for the National Performance Framework following Part 1 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which placed the outcomes framework on a statutory footing. (The lead committee for this is the [Local Government and Communities Committee](#)). The proposed new National Outcomes of particular relevance to education and the attainment gap are:

- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
- We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

The consultation proposes a number of indicators, one of which is educational attainment. In relation to this it states:

"The current attainment measure, which is based on PISA, will need to be replaced with the suite of attainment statistics set out in the National Improvement Framework, including the recently agreed measures on closing the attainment gap."

#### *Child Poverty Targets*

The [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#) (2017 Act) sets targets for the reduction of child poverty and requires local authorities and Scottish Ministers to publish delivery plans and report on progress. Of particular relevance to this inquiry is that the 2017 Act requires the delivery plan to state what measures are proposed to close the education attainment gap.

The targets are:

- By 2023 there will be less than 18% of children are in relative poverty, 14% in absolute poverty, 14% in combined low income and material deprivation, 8% in persistent poverty.
- By 2030 there will be less than 10% of children in relative poverty, less than 5% in absolute poverty, less than 5% in combined low income and material deprivation and less than 5% in persistent poverty.

The Child Poverty delivery plan, which sets out actions towards achieving these targets, is discussed further below.

## **ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**

Launched in February 2015, this will provide £750m over the course of this parliament for initiatives to tackle the attainment gap. There are four strands of activity:

- Challenge Authorities (9 local authorities: Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, North Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire)
- Schools Programme (74 schools, which receive the funding directly and were selected on the basis of having over 70% of their pupils living in the most 20% deprived (SIMD deciles 1 and 2) areas of Scotland)
- national activity (eg. development of a Scottish version of the EEF toolkit).
- Pupil Equity Funding – from 2017/18, provided directly to head teachers. For each pupil up to S3 registered for free school meals under the low income criteria, schools received £1,200 in 2017-18. This reaches 95% of schools. [National Operational Guidance](#) and the [Interventions for Equity](#) framework exists to support schools in their use of the funding.

Over the first two years, £52m was provided to Challenge Authorities and the schools programme. From 2017/18, £120m p.a is provided through the Pupil Equity Fund.

An [evaluation of the first two years of the fund](#) was published in March. This covers the 'attainment challenge' authorities 2015 to 2017, but does not cover the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). The PEF started in year 3, and it will be included in the next evaluation due to be published in early 2020. (See [evaluation strategy for years 3 and 4](#) ). Headteachers will report the use of PEF and impact to date in their schools annual standards and quality report ([S5W-14603](#)).

### **Types of intervention used**

The evaluation found that most of schools and local authorities had focused on teaching skills or practice (p.53 interim report). Part of the Attainment Challenge evaluation included a survey of headteachers. Asked about the types of interventions implemented:

- 30% listed literacy initiatives (235 literacy interventions were undertaken in 2016/17)
  - 27% listed numeracy initiatives (190 numeracy interventions were undertaken in 2016/17)
  - 24% listed health and wellbeing initiative (areas covered included, for example: nurture, transitions, targeted support, outdoor learning and mindfulness)
  - 48% referred to initiatives that focused on key improvement areas: parental engagement, use of data, staff development, resources and third sector partnerships/
- (Attainment evaluation interim report, December 2017 p51 – 52).

### **Successes and challenges in first two years**

The evaluation of the Challenge Authorities and school programme (2015-17) found that:

- collaboration improved – particularly within school collaboration and collaboration with external partners

- use of data and evidence improved
- it provided access to training and leadership opportunities for teaching

The challenges faced included:

- bureaucracy and tight timescales
- staff recruitment difficulties: “put extra pressure on schools and impacted negatively on the success of planned interventions, leading to frustration and underspend”
- collaboration between primary and secondary schools and between local authorities could be improved
- partnership across a range of services was required to tackle the attainment gap
- concern about the use of SIMD as a measure of deprivation
- mixed experience of attainment advisors, whose roles seemed to vary
- difficulties with parental engagement

### Funding and Underspending

The programme underspent by 28% across the two years, and by 50% in the challenge authorities in year 1 as set out in the table below:

	Allocation	Spend	Difference	% Difference
<b>Year 1 (15/16)</b>				
Challenge Authorities	£11.7	£5.9	£5.9	-50%
Schools Programme	£2.5	£2.3	£0.2	-8%
<b>Year 2 (16/17)</b>				
Challenge Authorities	£32.5	£25	£7.5	-23%
Schools Programme	£5.2	£4.0	£1.2	-23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£51.9</b>	<b>£37.2</b>	<b>£14.7</b>	<b>-28%</b>

source: Table 4.4, Attainment Challenge Evaluation

### Lack of data to assess impact

The evaluation report also highlights the lack of baseline data for primary schools, pointing out that there is no consistent local authority level data for primary and early secondary prior to the start of the fund. (The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy was a sample based survey and so only showed national trends). The programme only expanded into secondary schools in 2016/17, and the latest school leaver attainment data available is for 2015/16. Therefore:

“without more evidence, at this stage we are unable to conclude the level of impact the fund may have had in raising attainment and closing the poverty related gap.”  
(para 11.154 evaluation report).

### CHILD POVERTY DELIVERY PLAN

The Scottish Government has recently published its [Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2018-22](#). Given the broad range of policy areas impacting on educational attainment, the majority of the measures could be considered as having at least an indirect effect on the attainment gap. Measures of particular, and most immediate, relevance to the attainment gap reflect some of the themes raised in submissions to the Committee and include:

- costs of the school day
  - £31,000 additional funding to CPAG for ‘cost of the school day’ activity
  - a new minimum level of school clothing grant, at a level yet to be determined. Guidance to local authorities will refer to automatic payments, single application forms for local authority administered benefits and branded school uniforms.
  - provision of free sanitary products in schools, colleges and universities by Autumn 2018
  - £500,000 additional funding for the Fair Food Fund in 18/19 and £1m over two years in the Tackling Child Poverty Fund to address food insecurity in the school holidays
  - research current initiatives, and consider whether further action is required at a national level.
  - up to £300,000 in 18/19 for a current pilot in Highland looking at using the Young Scot card to, for example, provide free transport – “this could mean, for example, offering access to free or reduced-priced transport, leisure, sports or extra-curricular activities” (A strong theme in evidence received by the Committee was accessibility of extra-curricular activities).
  - £9m for the Youth Music Initiative “to ensure every pupil is offered a year’s free music tuition by the time they leave school” (p.88 of the delivery plan).
- new support for students and communities from further and higher education (p.76) through widening access and supporting students in positive destinations (both topics the Committee is considering separately from this inquiry).
- developing a new strategic framework for after school and holiday childcare by the end of this parliament – noting that the Attainment Challenge is already funding enhanced provision in some areas “ranging from homework clubs to family learning activities” (p.42)
- learning support for gypsy/traveller families with children. £500,000 from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund for a community education programme.
- consider what else can be done to strengthen the system for providing Education Maintenance Allowance (p.83)

## **RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND ENTITLEMENTS IN THE CURRICULUM**

The right to education set out in the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000 is to an education which is:

“directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.” ([s.2, 2000 Act](#))



Although not statutory, Curriculum for Excellence makes a number of statements about what every child and young person is entitled to experience:

- a curriculum that is coherent from 3 to 18
- a broad general education (from early years to S3)
- a senior phase (S4-S6) where he or she can obtain qualifications
- opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, focusing on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that Curriculum for Excellence can provide
- support in moving into positive and sustained destinations beyond school.

### **REQUIREMENT THAT SCHOOL EDUCATION IS FREE**

Local authorities are required to provide education free of charge. Section 11 of the 1980 Act requires that:

“An education authority shall provide free of charge for all pupils belonging to their area who are given a free education [...] books, writing materials, stationary mathematical instruments, practice material and other articles which are necessary to enable the pupil to take full advantage of the education provided.”

Perhaps the strongest theme in the submissions received by the Committee is the impact of various expenses which mean that, in effect, school education is not free of charge – including costs of materials, books, school trips/field trips, extra-curricular activities, uniforms, school meals etc.

### **FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION RELATED EXPENSES**

Local authorities have duties and powers to provide financial or “in-kind” assistance for educational related expenses. The main duties are:

- a requirement to provide free school meals to certain eligible children and a power to do so otherwise (s.53, 1980 Act)
- a duty to “make such arrangements as they consider necessary” for free or subsidised transport (s.51, 1980 Act)
- a requirement to provide that pupils are “suitably clad” where it is brought to their attention that a child “is unable by reason of the inadequacy or unsuitability of his clothing to take full advantage of the education provided” (s.54 1980 Act). This provision underpins provision of school clothing grants.

The local authority also has powers to:

- provide kit for PE or other activities requiring special clothing (section 11(2) 1980 Act)
- make payments “enabling persons to take advantage without hardship to themselves or their parents of the facilities for school education available to them.” Payments can cover all or part of: “such expenses of persons attending any school as may be expedient to enable them to take full part in the activities of the school.”

Free school meal eligibility has recently been altered to take account of the introduction of Universal Credit. Scottish legislation has set an income threshold of £610 per month for those on Universal Credit. A similar move in England has been relatively controversial.<sup>3</sup>

The eligibility for school clothing grants is currently set locally. Scottish Ministers have regulation making powers to set national criteria (Education (Scotland) Act 2016 s. 23 inserting s.54A into the 1980 Act). This provision is not yet in force, although the Scottish Government has made a commitment in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan to introduce a minimum level of grant.

Another form of financial assistance available is the Education Maintenance Allowance. This provides £30 a week to young people (16-19) in low income families (£24,421 in one child families and £26,884 for families with two or more children) if they stay on in school or college. [Statistics](#) show that, in 2015/16, of the 22,530 EMA recipients in schools, 7,235 (32%) lived in the 20% most deprived SIMD areas. Maintaining the EMA scheme is referred to in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENT TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON EDUCATION**

The [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) requires that when local authorities are making strategic decisions, they must have regard to reducing inequalities of outcome for pupils experience socio-economic disadvantage. There is a similar duty on Ministers and associated reporting requirements. The Scottish Government issued [guidance for local authorities in March 2017](#). This summarises the duty as:

“In effect, the primary duty in section 3B of the 2000 Act, requires that education authorities continually consider whether they can do more to help those pupils impacted by socio-economic disadvantage to achieve equality of outcome and to give due weight to the outcome of those considerations when delivering school education.”

The duty includes consideration of both attainment and wider achievement. The guidance elaborates:

“inequalities of outcome” is the term used to describe a measurable difference in the achievement and attainment of children who fall within groups which share certain characteristics and those who do not. The term “attainment” denotes educational performance and the acquisition of the valuable skills, knowledge and attributes needed to succeed in life. The term “achievement” refers to the totality of skills and attributes embedded within the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and developed across the curriculum in school and through learning in other contexts. Assessment of attainment includes evaluation of a range of evidence on what children and young people learn and achieve throughout their school career. This includes Curriculum for Excellence levels, skills, qualifications, other awards and wider achievement. It is recognised that not all ‘wider achievement’ is measureable, for example, voluntary work and participation in sport, the arts or other activities in the community.”

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<sup>3</sup> A [motion of regret](#) was passed by the House of Lords on 21<sup>st</sup> March. The equivalent Scottish legislation ([SSI 2017/182](#)) was approved by the Education and Skills Committee on [28 June 2017](#). The IFS has recently published an [analysis](#) of those who will gain and lose entitlement under the new rules in England.

A strong theme in the submissions is the value of wider achievement to tackling the attainment gap.

The 2016 Act also requires Ministers to publish a National Improvement Framework and for local authorities and Scottish Ministers report on progress. The [2018 National Improvement Plan](#) (December 2017) covers both the duty to publish a NIF plan and the duty to also publish an annual plan setting out the action they will take to close the poverty-related attainment gap. A report on progress is also required. The [NIF evidence report](#) (December 2017) highlights trends in attainment by SIMD.

There are other, fairly recently enacted, statutory duties which require local authorities and others to consider children's rights and socio-economic inequalities when making decisions which might also be expected to impact on decisions about tackling the attainment gap.

The [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) requires a range of public authorities (including all local authorities and health boards) to report, "as soon as practicable" after the end of each 3 year period, on the steps they have taken to secure better or further effect of the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Scottish Government published [guidance](#) on meeting these duties. The first reports are due in 2020. The UNCRC includes a right to education and a right to an adequate standard of living.

[Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010](#) requires various public authorities to have regard to reducing the impact of socio-economic disadvantage when taking decisions of a strategic nature. (The power to commence this section was devolved to Scotland under the Scotland Act 2016). It is a more general version of the education focused duty in s.1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

## THEMES IN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

The final section of this paper summarises the key themes in the written submissions received by the Committee.

The Committee asked for submissions by 22<sup>nd</sup> March and received 79 by 4<sup>th</sup> April. These are available in PDFs on the Committee website. [Submissions received by 4<sup>th</sup> April are available here](#). [Three additional submissions received by 6<sup>th</sup> April are available here](#).

The following pulls together the main themes, firstly on the way in which poverty has an impact on education, then looking at what schools can do before considering factors outwith the school.

### THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON EDUCATION

It is clear that poverty is strongly correlated with attainment and achievement. The section below summarises views from the submissions about how this happens. The key themes raised are:

- the cost of the school day – which can limit participation in school and limit access to the full range of educational activities
- access to extra-curricular activities and wider achievement – which can in turn impact on attainment
- term structures – in particular the impact of the long summer break
- the stress of poverty – and how that can impacts on the ability of families to engage with education
- the importance of early learning and childcare – focusing particularly on the gap in ability already evident before starting school

The LSE has recently published an [update of its 2013 'money matters' report](#), which noted that:

“While there is a vast amount of evidence demonstrating that children from low income households tend to have worse outcomes, much less is known about how far this relationship can be described as causal, rather than simply reflecting other related factors, such as parental education.”

The study refers to two, inter-related, models of how income affects outcomes:

- Investment Model – money affects parents’ ability to invest in goods and services that contribute to healthy child development
- Family Stress Model – managing low financial resources can be stressful and have a negative impact on parents’ mental health, which can have a negative impact on parenting

### Cost of the school day

Many submissions referred to the additional costs to school, and in particular the work initiated by CPAG on raising awareness of these costs and their impact. Costs identified include:

- school uniform
- supplies for practical subjects, which can limit access to the curriculum

- music tuition costs
- school meals
- travel costs, which can affect attendance and access to after school activities including supported study
- resources required for homework
- school fundraising days
- school trips/ field trips

The submission from CPAG includes some quotes from teachers and pupils including:

“There’s nothing to do at the summer fair if you don't have money. Even throwing a sponge at the teacher costs about £1. Sometimes you just have to sit in class if you don't have any money, that’s happened to me. You get made fun of.” (Learner, P5)

“I've got to go to the library because we don't have a computer at home and I've had to hand in homework late or rush it and it hasn't been the best because I've only been able to get there at lunch or break and sometimes I've got to skip lunch to make sure I get the work done.” (Learner, S5)

The Poverty Truth Commission also includes examples from parents of situations their children have faced including lack of access to IT equipment, inability to take part in after school clubs (including homework clubs) because free school transport is only provided at the end of the school day and getting sent home for not wearing ‘full’ school uniform.

NASUWT report their survey findings, that 16% of parents surveyed said that they had to pay for a field trip linked to an exam and that:

“more and more evidence emerging that some young people are being forced to reject the subject options they would prefer because their parents would be unable to afford the books, equipment or field trips necessary for the course.”

Other submissions raising this issue include CELCIS, Poverty Truth Commission, Children’s Parliament, Connect (SPTC) and Dr Terry Wrigley.

Some submissions give examples of where they have implemented a ‘cost of the school day’ project/poverty proofing (eg. Tynecastle High School, 1 in 5 Edinburgh Council).

### **‘Extra-curricular’ activities and wider achievement**

Many of the submissions, particularly those from youth work related organisations, referred to the value of extra-curricular activities in promoting resilience, self-confidence and motivation. See for example the submissions from the Awards Network, Duke of Edinburgh, Learning Links, Church of Scotland, Scouts, Youthlink.

For example the Scottish Outdoor Education Centre said:

“Residential experiences combined with outdoor learning (REOL) is a hugely powerful pedagogy that contributes significantly to both achievement and attainment.” They ask: “Why is a residential experience out of reach for some pupils and particularly pupils from poorer areas?”

Scouts Scotland refer to research on the impact of youth work:

“Programmes that enable an individual to develop resilience and capability have a positive effect on outcomes in youth (Larson, 2000: pp.170-83). In particular, programmes that centre on ‘positive youth development’ (Damon, 2004: pp.13-24), developing social, vocational and cognitive competence, developing self-confidence, developing respect for societal and cultural rules connection to others and developing caring and compassion (Lerner et al., 2005: pp.17-71).”

It also assists more directly with attainment. For example UNISON say that:

“going to see a play live makes it easier to get good marks in English than just reading it in a book or out loud in class.”

Submissions from National Theatre of Scotland, Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Edinburgh Science Festival also refer to this wider conception of learning.

The Awards Network refer to a review by Education Scotland which found that:

“For some young people facing additional challenges participation in youth awards is life changing.”

Curriculum for Excellence places an increased emphasis on wider achievement. However, many of these types of activities are more likely to come with some kind of cost compared to more traditional education. If ‘wider achievement’ is considered a more important part of the curriculum, then any costs associated with this attain a greater significance.

### **Long summer holidays**

In addition to costs during term time, the structure of the school year was raised. The long summer holiday was referred to by some as creating particular stresses for those from low income families. (See for example submissions from Children in Scotland and Youthlink) Children in Scotland refer to recent research ([Shinwell et al, 2017](#)) on a group of low SES primary school pupils in Scotland and North East England. The research article notes the caveat that it did not compare high and low SES pupils, nor include maths.

“This study is the first UK-based study to demonstrate that that summer learning loss, or at least stagnation, occurs in a population of children attending schools in areas of low SES in relation to spelling, but that after 7 weeks of teaching, children were able to exceed the level they achieved prior to the summer holiday. However, the summer holidays did not result in a loss of word reading skills.”

The article includes a discussion of different findings on the ‘summer holiday’ effect, in particular research on the (much longer) school summer break in the US. It also refers to holiday clubs as a possibly effective means to mitigate learning loss.

The cost of providing meals over the summer holidays was also raised (eg Children in Scotland) and reference made to the [“food 365” programme pilot](#) over the Easter holidays in North Lanarkshire.

In addition to the ‘cost of the school day’, CPAG has also led work in Scotland on [‘The cost of the school holidays’](#) (2015). This raised three main themes:

- cost pressures over the holiday period
- difficulties in sourcing and providing childcare

- emotional pressures – children can expect to have the same holiday experiences as their peers

The issue of ‘holiday hunger’ has received increasing attention recently. For example, Frank Field MP has introduced a [member’s bill](#) to the UK parliament to require local authorities to facilitate the delivery of programmes that provide free meals and activities for children during school holidays.

### **Poverty creates stress**

The stress created by poverty is referred to in a number of submissions. For example, Children in Scotland state that:

“the stress of living in challenging financial circumstances and the lack of financial resources can limit the opportunity for parents to give their children these developmental inputs so critical to academic attainment.”

Homestart refer to poverty as an ‘adverse childhood experience.’ They state that:

there is also good evidence that poverty, especially profound and long-term material disadvantage, is another ACE and a key driver of what researchers now call ‘toxic stress’ responses”

There has been an increasing interest in ACEs in recent years. An NHS Health Scotland briefing (2017) on “[Tackling the attainment gap by preventing and responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)” lists them (physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Physical or emotional neglect. Mental illness, domestic violence, divorce, relative in prison, substance abuse). It states that:

“In addition to the ACEs outlined above, there are other types of childhood adversity, including growing up in poverty. Poverty is also a risk factor for experiencing the ACEs outlined above”

and that action to tackle these requires:

“responding to the relational and emotional impacts of childhood adversity. Such actions are required in conjunction with a focus on poverty and income inequalities.”

### **Pre-school early intervention**

It is well-established that the ‘attainment gap’ is evident before children start school. Growing up in Scotland (a longitudinal study of young children in Scotland) found that at age 5:

“In terms of household income, as income increased, cognitive ability also increased for each assessment.” ([Knudsen et al 2017](#))

[The GUS study](#) notes that:

“Previous longitudinal research has established that early cognitive ability influences later life outcomes. For example, analysis of the 1970 Birth Cohort Study showed that assessments of ability at 22 and 42 months predicted educational qualifications at age 26 (Feinstein, 2003)”



Reflecting this, a number of submissions emphasise the importance of the pre-school period in seeking to reducing the school age attainment gap. See for example, Children in Scotland, CELCIS, Homestart, Church of Scotland, Save the Children. Save the Children state that:

“support for children’s early cognitive and language development; at home, in early learning and childcare settings and schools, and in the wider community, should be a greater priority for action and investment.”

The Scottish Government describe their commitment to expand early learning and childcare provision as, in part, an anti-poverty measure. The Child Poverty Delivery plan states that:

“it helps provide children with skills and confidence to carry into school and is a cornerstone for closing the poverty-related attainment gap – so it has an important preventative dimension for adulthood.”

In their submission, the EIS discussed the importance of teachers in early years settings. The number of teachers in pre-school education has reduced from 1,630 in 2009 to 1,129 in 2017 ([Scottish Government teacher census 2017](#)). The Scottish Government’s focus is on childhood practitioner graduates rather than teachers. The Scottish Government also has a commitment to provide:

“an additional graduate in nurseries in Scotland’s most deprived communities from August 2018, which will see an extra 435 graduates working directly with children” ([Scottish Government consultation on ELC service model, March 2018](#))

### **Poverty not causal**

A few submissions referred to other things that impact on attainment. For example Children in Scotland considered that:

“It is vital to be clear, however, that as a single variable poverty is not the most significant determinant of educational attainment. Parent attributes, behaviours and style are far more relevant. For example, attachment and warmth are important factors in educational attainment (and, indeed in other life outcomes). However, the existence and extent of these factors is strongly associated with material poverty, that is poverty which makes it harder for parents to provide these factors.”

NPFS consider that parental involvement has a bigger impact than socio-economic background, parents’ educational attainment, family structure or ethnicity. On the other hand, EIS consider that:

“Familial income, is, of course, the most influential factor in children’s in-school attainment and wider achievement; therefore, closing the poverty-related attainment gap requires an honest commitment to addressing the structural inequalities that emerge from policy decisions in those areas that are beyond the locus of the education system.”

### **WHAT COULD BE DONE?**

The Committee asked for suggestions about how to mitigate the impact of poverty on attainment and also about the barriers to achieving this.



Many submissions make the point that schools can't solve the problem on their own (eg CELCIS, COSLA, Education Scotland, NPFS, Youthlink, Includem) and the majority of submissions refer to factors beyond the school. However others also point out that schools can still do a lot (eg: Includem, Dr Terry Wrigley, EIS). For example the Poverty Truth Commission state that:

“simple changes to the school day could help have a positive impact on a young person's life.”

Similarly, the submission from CPAG states that: “the primary goal should be tackling poverty” but that:

“there are significant actions that can be taken at school to reduce barriers to learning, relieve pressure on families budget and help reduce the attainment gap”

The submission from the Robert Owen Centre refers to:

“schools accounting for 18-50% of the variance after background factors have been taken into account”

to emphasise that closing the gap requires action beyond schools.

The following section groups suggestions in the submissions into different types of activity. It first lists those directly within the control of school/education policy before looking at suggestions for action outwith the school.

The submission from the EEF includes a diagram showing the ‘effectiveness’ of various interventions. The [‘Scottish Attainment Challenge Learning and Teaching Toolkit’](#) summarises research on the effectiveness of different interventions. This relates to effectiveness in general – not to the specific aim of increasing attainment amongst children living in deprived areas. It is interesting that some of those most widely suggested in the submissions, such as those around ‘wider achievement’ are not, in the EEF assessment, the most cost effective. The more cost-effective interventions are: provision of ‘feedback’, meta-cognition and self-regulation, one to one tuition, peer tutoring, collaborative learning and reading comprehension strategies.

The submission from the Robert Owen Centre describes an organising framework of interventions that looks at action within the school, between schools and beyond schools.

A SPICe briefing ([Marcus, 2016](#)) considers teaching and school leadership approaches that can help tackle the attainment gap.

## **Within school/education policy**

### ***Teaching methods, school structures and curriculum***

- Teaching approaches:

The NASUWT consider that: “The principal contribution made by schools in enhancing the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people relates to their work in providing high-quality learning experiences.” Similarly, the EEF stated that: “improving the quality of teaching is likely to have greater impact on

disadvantaged pupils.” A teacher suggested making one to one tutoring available to those living in poverty. The EEF note that while expensive, one to one /small group tuition “often (has) stronger positive impact for the most disadvantaged children.” Simon Needham referred to the need for education staff “to offer a nurturing environment.” The Robert Owen Centre refers to the importance of teachers’ professional development and collaboration within and between schools, to provide greater opportunity to share what works.

- Classroom organisation

Dr Terry Wrigley referred to segregation into ability groupings and having many teachers in S1/S2 as impacting on attainment, implying that changing these practices would impact on the attainment gap. (The diagram from the EEF indicates that setting and streaming have a negative effect on pupil progress). The EIS also recommended mixed ability classes. Referring to ICT access, the Poverty Truth Commission suggested not setting homework on-line, and allowing printing out at school.

- Cost of the curriculum

One of the aspects raised on the ‘cost of the school day’ was when where costs of certain school subjects might limit access to certain school subjects eg music tuition (EIS), practical subjects ( 1 in 5 Edinburgh Council)

- Summer holidays

The long summer holiday was identified as an issue, (see above). Lorna Walker suggested a shorter summer holiday, others suggested supporting children through holiday clubs. (eg 1 in 5 Edinburgh Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Tynecastle school).

- Working with families

NPFS and Save the Children, among others discussed the need to improve parental involvement. Some working with families can be done outwith the school (see submission from Aberlour), but there is also a role for schools. For example Caroline Farquhar suggested that: “schools can help by working with families and communities to build support networks, think outside the box and provide soft life skills that support the ‘whole person.’”

- School breaks

The Poverty Truth Commission suggested that allowing pupils to leave school at lunch time created additional stigma for those who took free school meals. It was suggested that pupils should be encouraged pupils to stay in school at lunch time, to reduce the impact of this kind of peer pressure.

### ***Financial or ‘in kind’ support***

As mentioned, there was frequent reference to reducing the costs of the school day (Youthlink, CPAG, Poverty Commission, EIS, Scottish Youth Parliament, NASUWT) The NASUWT go further and suggest “regulations which will secure poverty proofing of the school day should be prioritised moving forward. It is essential that schools are given clear

statutory guidance on charging policies and curriculum access.” Specific suggestions include:

- extend free school meals (Poverty Truth Commission, EIS )
- breakfast clubs and after-school clubs – including to help with homework in school (Simon Needham, a parent)
- free school transport, including for after school activities and pupils outwith catchment area (Poverty Truth Commission, Tynecastle school)
- increase the Education Maintenance Allowance (Youthlink)
- increase school clothing grants (Youthlink, Tynecastle school). COSLA note that they “have been in positive discussions with the Scottish Government on how school clothing grants are provided.”
- free sanitary protection (Youthlink)
- improve access to ICT at home, at school and in community premises (youth link, sumdog, Scottish Youth Parliament)
- money advice services located or signposted to from schools (See initiatives referenced by 1 in 5 Edinburgh Council submission)

### ***Resource Issues***

General resources issues were mentioned or implied in many submissions. For example, the EIS stated:

“There is no cheap way of delivering an education system that is both excellent and equitable. Only long-term, protected investment will deliver that worthy ambition.”

COSLA discuss budget cuts, but also note that the attainment gap is narrowing despite this. UNISON refer to budget cuts as risking the “extra curricular activities that make a difference.”

Other suggestions closely linked to the overall resource available to schools include:

- increase teacher numbers to enable smaller class sizes (EIS)
- fund school libraries (Unison)
- make good use of teaching assistants (EEF)
- make better use of the school estate during the holidays (Children in Scotland)
- increase resource available for additional support needs (Children in Scotland, UNISON, Lorna Walker, Save the Children, Maggie Hodge )

It was also noted (in an anonymous submission from a teacher) that various other education policies including GIRFEC, CfE complexity and general bureaucracy are creating pressures on teachers with the implication that this limits their ability to tackle the attainment gap. On the other hand, COSLA referred to GIRFEC as a positive policy enabling a holistic view of the child.

### ***Wider Achievement***

A number of submissions from youth work organisations emphasised how youth work and a focus on wider achievement could contribute to raising attainment. Some of this is or could be delivered in a school context, some is about access to these types of activities outwith school. Suggestions include:

- emphasise the centrality of wider achievement to CfE (Awards Network).
- improve community based learning (youth link)
- improve reporting of non-certificated learning (Duke of Edinburgh)
- provide funding for extra-curricular clubs and events (Simon Needham, Dr Terry Wrigley)

### **Culture and Attitudes**

Some submissions explicitly raised or implied that some barriers to tackling the attainment gap were attitudinal. For example, while much of the cost of the school day work is about practical barriers, it also addresses the broader issue of raising awareness amongst teachers about the impact of poverty on children. There is also a strand of argument about the dominant culture in education being essentially middle class. Points made included:

- the need for far greater recognition of the complexities of young people's lives outside of school (Includem)
- cost of the school day projects/ poverty proofing can raise awareness about the way poverty impacts on pupils' school experience (CPAG, 1 in 5 Edinburgh City Council).
- schools do not always recognise the value of 'extra-curricular' activities (eg. Youthlink, Youth Awards) or broader family support (Aberlour)
- there is a stigma of accessing certain kinds of help at school, such as school clothing grants (Poverty Truth Commission, 1 in 5 Edinburgh Council)
- NPFS refer to a survey which found that "only 60% of parents felt that the head teacher was open and approachable." This fell to 54% in the C2DE socio-economic bracket.
- schools are concerned with the schools' overall results (Poverty Truth Commission)
- Morag Treanor referred to: "a major barrier to education for poorer children lies in the culture of education itself."

More broadly, the Robert Owen Centre emphasise the importance of culture, ethos and leadership in effecting change within schools.

### **Outwith school**

Many submissions referred to factors outwith school as impacting on attainment and achievement. For example, COSLA stated that:

"children and young people are ready to learn when they are emotionally stable, with positive relationships in their life and where they attend school on a regular and consistent basis."

CELCIS states that:

"for children to be ready to learn in the classroom, they must have the opportunity for optimal development from birth and through infancy"

For this reason, there is a focus in the submissions on family support, early years early intervention and general anti-poverty measures. These include:

- income and resource maximisation for families (Aberlour, CPAG)
- inter-generational projects (Learning Link)
- family learning projects (Learning link, Homestart)
- family support (GCHP, Homestart, Aberlour)
- early years provision (Homestart, Children in Scotland, CELCIS, EIS, Church of Scotland)
- impact of poor housing (CELCIS, Dr Terry Wrigley, GCHP, UNISON, connect)

### **Collaboration between schools and others**

The need for a multi-agency and/or multi-service approach is a common theme in the submissions. For example, Glasgow Centre for Population Health state that:

“efforts to tackle poverty and improve attainment need to consider all spheres of children’s lives drawing on the principles and approach set out in Getting it Right for Every Child. This includes children’s family and parental environment, learning environment, neighbourhood, and crucially the socioeconomic circumstances in which they are growing up.”

The submission from the Robert Owen Centre refers to the place based approach of [“Children’s Neighbourhoods Scotland”](#) which it has helped develop saying it: “presents a significant opportunity for tackling child poverty and improving outcomes.”

CPAG refer to NHS Scotland’s Child Poverty in Schools Practice Network which brings local authority leads together to share practice.

Aberlour consider effective practice to include:

- working with the whole family and providing support beyond the school gates
- continuity of support, building trusting relationships
- not expecting a quick fix
- recognise the effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Similar points are made by Homestart whose work focuses on the home learning environment. COSLA and Includem emphasise the value of the range of services that can be co-ordinated through local authority structures and worry that governance reforms may limit this.

### **ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE AND PUPIL EQUITY FUND**

A number of submissions commented on the Scottish Government’s Attainment Challenge initiative.

Generally the extra funding was welcomed, but issues raised included:

- the need for better accountability , better ‘financial transparency’ (SLS) , the need for evaluation (Children in Scotland).
- variability in approach (Reading Wise, SLS)
- the bigger issue is the cuts to core services (NASUWT, SLS, a teacher).
- short timeframes for funding it can be difficult ensure that money is spent on the most effective measures (CELCIS)

- it can create capacity issues for third sector organisations (Princes Trust)

The SLS summarise the type of PEF approaches used, which they categorise into:

- getting young people into school
- supporting young people while they are in school
- keeping young people in learning
- providing young people with the full range of opportunities
- eliminating poverty of ambition
- developing an aspirational awareness of positive leaver destinations

Specific examples of PEF/Attainment Challenge activity given in submission include those from; Homestart, Aberlour, Reading Wise, Princes Trust and Dalmarnock Primary school

## ANNEX: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT MEASURES OF THE ATTAINMENT GAP

Measure	All children %	Most disadvantaged (bottom 20%SIMD) %	Least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD) %	Gap (percentage points)
27-30 month review (Children showing no concerns across all domains)	63.7	54.8	71.7	16.8
HWB: Children total difficulties score (age 4-12)	14	22	6	16
HWB: Children total difficulties score (age 13&15)	31	34	26	8
Primary – Literacy (P1, P4, P7 combined)	69.2	59.8	81.5	21.8
Secondary Literacy (S3, 3rd level or better)	87.1	80.8	94.4	13.6
Primary – Numeracy (P1, P4, P7 combined)	76.4	69.2	86.5	17.3
Secondary Numeracy (S3, 3rd level or better)	88.2	80.7	95.5	14.8
SCQF 4 or above (1 or more on leaving school)	96.3	92.8	98.8	6
SCQF 5 or above (1 or more on leaving school)	85.6	74.4	94.7	20.3
SCQF 6 or above (1 or more on leaving school)	61.7	42.7	81.2	38.5
Participation measure	91.1	84.8	96.3	11.5

**EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE**

**11th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5), Wednesday, 18 April 2018**

**Witness Submissions Pack**

**Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the submissions received from the four witness organisations for next week's evidence session on Attainment and achievement of school age children experiencing poverty.

**Witness submissions**

Submissions have been received from four of the witnesses on this week's panel.

- [Annexe A Child poverty Action Group in Scotland](#)
- [Annexe B Education Endowment Foundation](#)
- [Annexe C Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)
- [Annexe D Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change](#)



**EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE****Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty****Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland****Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland - 22 March 2018**

*CPAG works on behalf of the more than one in four children in the UK growing up in poverty. It doesn't have to be like this. Our vision is of a society free of child poverty, where all children can enjoy a childhood free of financial hardship and have a fair chance in life to reach their full potential.*

**Context**

Between 2014 and 2017, one in four children in Scotland were officially recognised as living in poverty,<sup>1</sup> with forecasts projecting significant increases by 2020.<sup>2</sup> There is clear evidence that growing up in poverty undermines children's attainment.<sup>3</sup> The primary goal of policy makers must be to end the poverty that prevents children attaining to their potential. The 2017 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act is extremely welcome in setting statutory targets toward the eradication of child poverty, and creating a planning and accountability framework that requires national and local government to set out and report on the actions taken toward meeting those targets. It is now vital that the Scottish Parliament ensures priority and resources across government are directed at increasing family incomes (through improved employment and enhanced social security) as well as reducing the costs that families face (including childcare and housing costs.) *Preventing* the attainment gap by ending child poverty must be the primary goal. However, there are significant actions that can be taken at school to reduce barriers to learning, relieve pressure on family budgets and help reduce the attainment gap.

**Poverty limits what children and young people can do and take part in at school.**

Since 2014, CPAG's [Cost of the School Day](#) project has been working with children, parents and staff in schools across Scotland to identify actions which help tackle financial barriers to children's participation, learning and wellbeing throughout the school day.

From uniform, travel and trips to learning resources, lunch and clubs, we have gathered a wealth of evidence on the multiple costs that exist at school and the impact on children's participation, learning and wellbeing of being unable to meet them. We also have evidence of actions to tackle these costs which increase access to opportunities and improve pupil wellbeing.

Investigating school costs with children, parents/carers and staff and taking action to address identified problems and barriers can help

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/03/3017/0>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/10028>

<sup>3</sup> E.g. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/education-scotland>

- ensure equal access to opportunities at school and remove barriers to learning and participation for children and young people from low income households
- minimise opportunities for poverty stigma and exclusion amongst young people
- reduce the pressures which school costs place on low family incomes and support families to access financial entitlements and maximise their incomes
- ensure that Pupil Equity Funding is accurately used to remove financial barriers at school for children and young people from low income households.

Cost of the School Day approaches are an integral part of closing the poverty attainment gap. Children can't learn when they can't participate or when they are unhappy. Action to address school costs helps to clear the way of the barriers which stop some children benefiting from teaching strategies proven to raise attainment. The Cost of the School Day project is recommended as an [Intervention for Equity](#) in the Pupil Equity Fund National Operational Guidance and a priority in the Scottish Government's [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#).

### **How do school costs impact on the education of children and young people in poverty?**

A range of school costs are difficult for low income families. This affects children's experiences at school – what they can do, what they can participate in, how they feel and how they learn.

#### ***Reduced and unequal access to opportunities at school***

- Difficulty paying travel costs can affect attendance. Accessing after school activities and supported study is difficult in schools with school buses because staying on requires paying extra to get home later
- Difficulties managing costs for subjects like Home Economics, Technical, Drama and Art and Design limit access to the curriculum and affect subject choices at certificate level
- School staff are aware of hungry children in their schools. Hunger affects children's concentration and learning

*"We have families who cannot claim for free school meals and they are breadline families. The parents are so proud and they go off to work but their children often come in hungry in morning."* (Teacher)

- Lack of access to ICT and unsuitable home learning environments require additional resourcefulness and effort to complete homework

*"I've got to go to the library because we don't have a computer at home and I've had to hand in homework late or rush it and it hasn't been the best because I've only been able to get there at lunch or break and sometimes I've got to skip lunch to make sure I get the work done."* (Learner, S5)

- Some children are unable to attend and benefit from school trips. Effort is required from school staff to fund subsidies in schools where parents are less likely to be able to pay

- Entry costs, equipment and travel can stop children participating in the full range of school clubs and wider achievement initiatives
- Not bringing money for fun events may mean not getting to take part

*“There’s nothing to do at the summer fair if you don’t have money. Even throwing a sponge at the teacher costs about £1. Sometimes you just have to sit in class if you don’t have any money, that’s happened to me. You get made fun of.” (Learner, P5)*

### **Poverty shame and stigma affecting wellbeing**

Inability to participate in the same activities as their peers can leave children feeling different and embarrassed. Children speak about being keenly aware of income differences and about feeling left out or deliberately self-excluding from opportunities.

*“Well I think if all of your friends or people you know go to the after-school clubs, school trips, that kind of isolates you from them. You’re singled out, you’re not with them, just a spare person.” (Learner, S5)*

- Insufficient, unkempt or unfashionable uniform can be picked on by other children. Non uniform days can place pressure on children to buy new outfits and they noticeably affect attendance
- Children can be sanctioned for having incorrect uniform or not having resources in the classroom, e.g. loss of Golden Time or detention

*“Children have the embarrassment of us saying ‘do you have your money? You can’t cook today’. If you’re collecting money there are other things you’re not doing. Course fees are just really unfair. It’s not a free curriculum.” (Teacher)*

- Children can feel embarrassed about asking for financial help and may not ask at all.

### **How Cost of the School Day supports school children experiencing poverty.**

Cost of the School Day has worked intensively in Glasgow and Dundee and has provided resources, training and advisory support to over 20 local authorities:

**We have raised practitioner awareness of the cost barriers which limit children’s learning and attainment and the impact of these cost barriers on children’s wellbeing at school.** Key benefits noted by participants have included enhanced understanding of the impact of poverty, increased knowledge of how to support children affected by poverty, mindfulness of costs when planning day to day in school and greater confidence to take action on costs which limit children’s participation.

**We have facilitated and advocated for policy and practice changes which ensure equal access to learning for children and young people.** Schools report that policy and practice changes have removed financial barriers and reduced costs for families.

**We have provided evidence to support authority wide actions** to, for example, increase levels of school clothing grant and automate payment of school clothing grants.

Recent research from the London School of Economics<sup>4</sup> tells us that money, in and of itself, has a causal effect on children's outcomes and that increased family income leads to improvements in children's outcomes, particularly cognitive development and school achievement. Therefore, approaches like Cost of the School Day which help families to maximise their disposable incomes can directly improve children's attainment.

### **Cost of the School Day actions which support attainment and achievement**

There are many examples of schools making a difference to children and young people's participation, learning and wellbeing when they recognise likely cost barriers and pre-emptively act to remove them. Examples from our recent practice survey are listed below with teacher perception of impact.

#### ***Ensuring participation and access to learning***

- A Falkirk Primary School spent PEF money on a supply of clothes which led to ***“improved self-esteem and engagement in learning. One pupil is now taking a full part in PE due to having an appropriate and fitting gym kit.”***
- A Dumfries and Galloway Secondary ensures access to the curriculum by offsetting Home Economics, Technical, Art, and PE costs: ***“Pupils do not avoid subjects as a result of curriculum costs. They are able to participate in all subjects without fear of extra costs.”***
- One Glasgow Secondary school in Glasgow says that the provision of resources to access the curriculum has led to ***“improved attainment and attendance for some vulnerable children.”*** A Moray Primary agrees that resource provision means ***“more children can take part and respond in class without stigma of having to say they didn't have a necessary resource that the others would take for granted.”***
- In a Glasgow Secondary, providing bus passes and lunch money led to ***increased attendance at an Easter revision programme*** by young people previously unlikely to attend.
- Breakfast club and free snacks in an Edinburgh Primary mean that ***“Children are able to concentrate better once they have eaten breakfast and their snack, thus having a positive impact on their attainment.”***
- 'Donation' only trips in a North Lanarkshire Primary mean that ***“children turn up on the trip rather than being kept off due to parental embarrassment at inability to pay for a trip.”***

#### ***Enhancing wellbeing***

- One Primary School in the Scottish Borders discretely gives out uniform and gym kit where necessary. ***“Children who have been given clothing immediately look happier and more settled. One child had been lying about why he was not wearing his uniform. He was embarrassed and his behaviour was disruptive. When given a change of clothing and items to take home his mood immediately improved. He was smiling and his confidence and self-esteem improved.”***
- A North Lanarkshire primary makes sure that fun events are free – as a result there is ***“an inclusive ethos where pupils feel valued.”***

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<sup>4</sup> [http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/\\_new/research/money\\_matters/report.asp](http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/money_matters/report.asp)

- A West Dunbartonshire Primary's preloved clothing bank "***reduces any potential bullying***... we have encouraged a 'no shame' approach and many parents and children access these clothes."

### **National applicability**

Cost of the School Day approaches have grown rapidly over the last four years and now exist in over 20 local authorities. NHS Health Scotland's Child Poverty in Schools Practice Network has helped to bring local authority leads together to share practice and potentially develop work further. The action research model used in schools is applicable in any context in Scotland as action is guided by the needs and priorities of participants.

### **Conclusion**

Child poverty rates in Scotland are high and look set to rise further in coming years without substantial policy changes at UK and Scotland level. It is vital that the Scottish Parliament prioritises action to end that poverty. In the meantime, children from low income households can't achieve at school if barriers created by poverty are not addressed. Cost of the School Day interventions puts money in family pockets and helps schools to remove financial barriers, clearing the way for children to fully participate, learn and achieve.

**John Dickie**

**Director**

**Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland**

**22 March 2018**

## **EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE**

### **Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty**

#### **The Education Endowment Foundation**

1.1 The Education Endowment Foundation was formed in 2011, with a £120m grant from the Department for Education. The aim of the organisation is to break the link between disadvantage and educational attainment.

1.2 The EEF's activities include: the evaluation of specific programmes, particularly through randomised controlled trials (RCTs); summarising and disseminating evidence on effective education practices; and scaling successful approaches to schools across England.

1.3 The EEF aims to give teachers the information they need to provide all pupils with a high quality education, regardless of background. Where specific interventions or programmes are found to be effective, the EEF supports the scale-up of these approaches, so that a greater number of pupils are recipients of promising strategies for improving attainment.

1.4 In Scotland, the EEF is working in partnership with Education Scotland to increase the use of evidence. There is now a Scottish version of the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit, an evidence synthesis of 34 approaches, summarising the average impact, cost, and security of evidence.<sup>i</sup>

#### **Well-evidenced approaches to improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils**

##### **2.1 The attainment gap**

2.2.1 Within Scotland, there is a clear gap between pupils from deprived and non-deprived backgrounds. This gap is reported in PISA scores<sup>ii</sup> and in national tests<sup>iii</sup>. Sutton Trust research has also found that the attainment gap exists for pupils with high levels of attainment in Scotland.<sup>iv</sup>

2.2.2 The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched in 2015, and aims to achieve equity in educational outcomes. The Pupil Equity Fund provides direct funding to schools for each pupil registered to receive free school meals from P1 to S3.

##### **2.2 Teacher quality**

2.2.1 The meta-analysis in the Teaching and Learning Toolkit shows that, relative to other strategies, efforts to improve the quality of pedagogy appear to be the most cost effective ways of achieving improvements in attainment outcomes (see Figure 1). By contrast, approaches that focus on the school structure, such as school uniform, reducing class sizes and performance pay, are less cost effective.

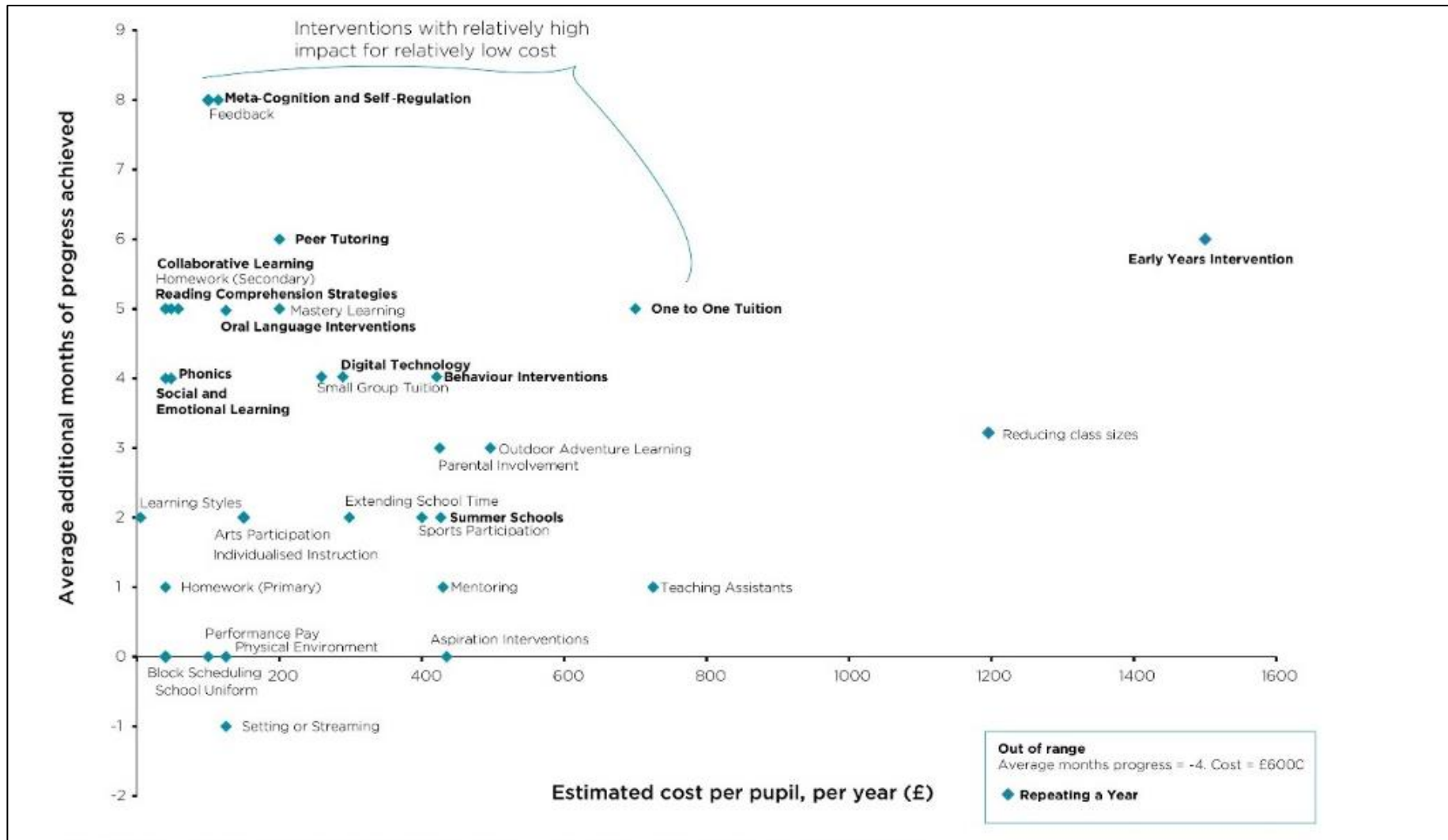


Figure 1: Cost effectiveness of the approaches listed in the Teaching and Learning Toolkit

2.2.2 There is evidence that improving the quality of teaching is likely to have a disproportionately positive impact on children from low-income families<sup>v</sup>, and that the quality of teaching is generally lower in schools serving disadvantaged communities.<sup>vi</sup>

2.2.3 Examples of cost-effective strategies that focus on teaching quality, include the use of metacognitive strategies, reading comprehension strategies, and the provision of effective feedback.<sup>vii</sup>

2.2.4 The positive impact of using metacognitive strategies as part of teaching has been further supported by individual randomised controlled trials of programmes such as 'Using Self-Regulation to Improve Writing'; 'Thinking, Doing, Talking Science'; and 'Philosophy for Children'. Each of these programmes provided teacher training on a meta-cognitive strategy, and independent evaluations found promising impacts on attainment outcomes.

## **2.3 Early Years Interventions**

2.2.1 Gaps between more affluent children and their peers emerge before the age of 5. A 2014 study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that by age 5, there is a gap of 10 months in problem solving and 13 months in vocabulary. Effective early years provision is crucial in preventing gaps from emerging before the start of compulsory education.<sup>viii</sup>

2.2.2 Evidence from the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, indicates that early years interventions, on average have an impact of five months' additional progress.

2.2.3 Improving the quality of provision – for example by training staff – appears to be more cost effective than simply increasing the quantity of provision. The 'Early Years Toolkit' is an evidence synthesis of 1,500 studies that aims to provide information on the cost, impact and evidence strength for 12 common early years approaches. Well evidenced approaches in early years settings include: developing early number concepts, using self-regulation strategies, and language development interventions.

2.2.4 There is weaker evidence on specific interventions that target children in early years settings. The EEF has evaluated one such intervention, which found promising impacts for an early language programme.<sup>ix</sup> Six further trials are underway, but evidence on specific interventions is still limited.

## **2.4 Targeted interventions**

2.2.5 There is consistent high quality evidence for targeted interventions such as one to one tuition and small group tuition.<sup>x</sup> These approaches can be expensive, but in most cases lead to moderate to high improvements in pupil outcomes, and often with stronger positive impact for disadvantaged children.

2.2.6 Effective examples of targeted interventions typically involve structured approaches that provide staff with high quality training and support in delivering the programme.

2.2.7 A good example of how of structured interventions can be used effectively is



when deploying teaching assistants. Evidence suggests that teaching assistants can have minimal impact when used as a supplementary teacher and not provided with any professional development or support. However, when delivering structured interventions, consistently positive impacts have been found in high quality evaluations.

2.2.8 Targeted interventions can be especially effective at closing gaps in attainment. There is evidence that, when targeted effectively, interventions can have greater impact on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, an evaluation of ABRACADABRA – a structured approach to reading delivered by teaching assistants – found an increased impact on attainment for pupils eligible for free school meals.<sup>xi</sup>

## **Barriers to closing the attainment gap**

### **3.1 Untested approaches**

3.1.1 While there is a growing evidence base on the effectiveness of various approaches, many schools still use practices or programmes that have not been tested. There is a risk that these approaches may increase the gap for disadvantaged pupils. For example, teaching assistants are frequently used to teach the disadvantaged pupils, despite evidence that this may increase attainment gaps if not part of a structured intervention.<sup>xii</sup>

3.1.2 Numerous training providers sell approaches that have no evidence of effectiveness. For example, there is a growing market for Ed-tech, which aims to use of technology to improve attainment. Evidence shows that, while digital technology resources can be effective at improving attainment, impacts are contingent on being paired with good pedagogical practice.<sup>xiii</sup> Schools may spend time and resources on approaches that are ultimately ineffective.

#### **Teacher workload**

3.1.3 Adopting evidence-based approaches to improving attainment for disadvantaged pupils requires time for selection, implementation and evaluation of such approaches. In numerous process evaluations for programmes evaluated in England, time and workload have been cited as key barriers to the effective delivery of approaches.<sup>xiv</sup>

3.1.4 Time for implementing successful interventions can often be made through critically assessing and stopping existing practices that are not having positive impacts on learning. For example, in England a large amount of teacher time is spent on marking approaches that have no basis in evidence.<sup>xv</sup>

3.1.5 Resources such as the Teaching and Learning Toolkit aim to reduce the barriers to using research by summarising findings that would otherwise be contained in academic journals across hundreds of separate studies.

## **Other areas of interest**

### **4.1 Parental engagement strategies**

4.1.1 The association between parental involvement and a child's academic success is well-established and there are numerous studies suggesting that

increasing parental engagement may be an effective way of closing the attainment gap.<sup>xvi</sup>

4.1.2 There is, however, little evidence on effective ways of engaging parents. The EEF has conducted three projects that have aimed to engage parents in training on how to support their children's learning.<sup>xvii</sup> In each case, the study found that participation rates were low and that it was difficult to attract and retain parents.

4.1.3 Another EEF-funded project aimed to engage parents using text messages to communicate the dates of upcoming tests, whether homework was submitted on time and what their children were learning at school.<sup>xviii</sup> This light-touch technique found small positive impacts on maths attainment and reducing absenteeism.

## **4.2 Retention and deployment of high quality teachers**

4.1.4 If the attainment gaps between rich and poor pupils are going to be reduced, disadvantaged pupils need access to high quality teachers. There are a range of potential levers for either increasing the overall quality of teaching in the system or directing high quality teachers to areas of disadvantage.

4.1.5 There is a lack of high quality evidence around approaches that work to retain high quality teachers. Given teacher shortages in several key subjects and regional areas in Scotland,<sup>xix</sup> this is an area that would benefit from evidence generation

4.1.6 In the USA, there have been several studies on incentivising high quality teachers to transfer to schools with poor performance or disadvantaged pupils. The largest study found an impact of 2-3 months on maths and reading scores.<sup>xx</sup> There have been no high quality studies of such 'transfer incentives' within the UK. The EEF, in partnership with Wellcome, is currently selecting projects looking at the most effective ways to retain science teachers in schools serving disadvantaged communities.

## **4.3 Using school to school collaboration to support implementation**

4.1.7 Partnerships between schools working on similar challenges can be a helpful way to support effective implementation of well-evidenced interventions. Schools can learn from each other, share resources (such as assessments checklists and access to training or coaching), and reflect on each other's successes and failures.

4.1.8 Scotland's Improvement Collaboratives could be used for this purpose if schools are able to self-organise or be supported to organise into groups of common interest, and if leadership of the groups is resourced. The EEF has been working in partnership with designated Research Schools to support a similar model in England.

## **The Education Endowment Foundation 22 March 2018**

i <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/EEF-Toolkit.aspx>

ii Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015: Highlights from Scotland's Results: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511095.pdf>

iii Scottish Government (2015) Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2014

(Literacy). <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00475898.pdf>

iv Global Gaps (2017) Sutton Trust highlights the gap for high attaining pupils: [https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Global-](https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Global-Gaps_FINAL_V2_WEB.pdf)

[Gaps\\_FINAL\\_V2\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Global-Gaps_FINAL_V2_WEB.pdf) v See Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK, 2011, The Sutton Trust: <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2teachers-impact-report-final.pdf>

vi Social inequalities in access to teachers (2016) Allen, Mian, Sims, Commission on Inequality in Education: <http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Social-Market-Foundation-Social-inequalities-in-access-to-teachers-Embargoed-0001-280416.pdf>

vii [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit)

[learning-toolkit](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit) viii Closing the Attainment Gap in Scottish Education (2014) Edward Sosu and Sue Ellis: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/closing-attainment-gap-scottish-education>

ix Nuffield Early Language Intervention (2016) Education Endowment Foundation: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/nuffield-early-language-intervention/>

x Teaching and Learning Toolkit, Education Endowment Foundation:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit>

xi ABRA: Online Reading Support (2016) Education Endowment Foundation: [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Projects/Evaluation\\_Reports/ABRA\\_with\\_addendum.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Projects/Evaluation_Reports/ABRA_with_addendum.pdf)

xii Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants Guidance Report (2015):

[https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/TA\\_Guidance\\_Report\\_MakingBestUseOfTeachingAssistants-Printable.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/TA_Guidance_Report_MakingBestUseOfTeachingAssistants-Printable.pdf)

xiii Digital Technology, Teaching and Learning Toolkit:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/digital-technology/>

xiv Including, but not limited to: [Teacher Observation \(2017\)](#), [Achieve Together \(2017\)](#), [Challenge the Gap \(2017\)](#) (All Education Endowment Foundation)

xv A Marked Improvement (2016), Education Endowment Foundation

[https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/EEF\\_Marking\\_Review\\_April\\_2016.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/EEF_Marking_Review_April_2016.pdf)

xvi Parental Involvement, Teaching and Learning Toolkit, Education Endowment Foundation: [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-involvement/)

[summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-involvement/](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-involvement/)

xvii Education Endowment Evaluation Reports: [Mind the Gap \(2014\)](#), [SPOKES \(2016\)](#), [Parent Academy \(2016\)](#)

xviii Texting Parents (2016) Education Endowment Foundation:

[https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Projects/Evaluation\\_Reports/Te](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Projects/Evaluation_Reports/Texting_Parents.pdf)

[xing\\_Parents.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Projects/Evaluation_Reports/Texting_Parents.pdf) xix Teacher Workforce Planning for Scotland's Schools (2017)

Education and Skills Committee: <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/ES/2017/9/1/Teacher-Workforce-Planning-for-Scotland-s-Schools/10th%20Report,%202017.pdf>

xx Glazerman, S., A. Protik, B. Teh, J. Bruch, J. Max. (2013). Transfer Incentives for High Performing Teachers: Final Results from a Multisite Experiment (NCEE 2014-

4003). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED544269.pdf>

**Annexe C****EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE****Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty****Joseph Rowntree Foundation**

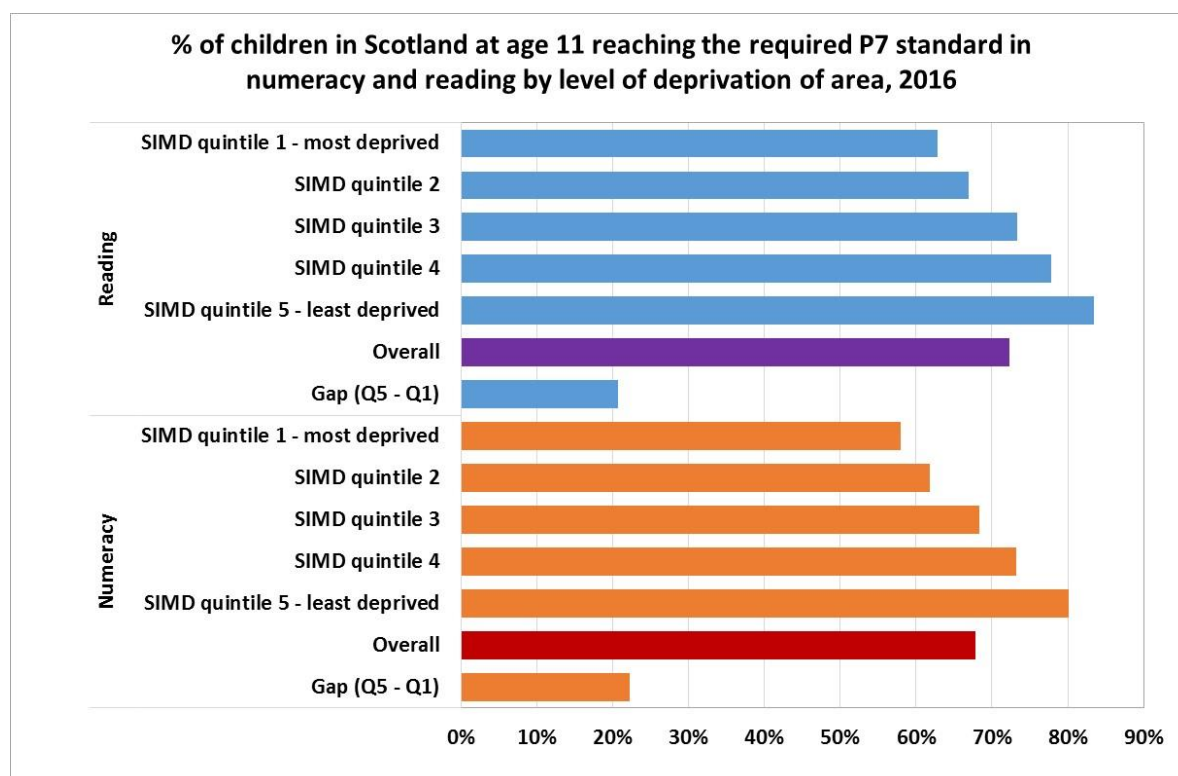
1. JRF warmly welcomes the Committee's inquiry. JRF is committed to identifying and addressing the root causes of poverty and disadvantage across the UK. We published a Solving Poverty strategy in 2016 to bring together the evidence on the causes and consequences of modern-day poverty and to set out solutions mapped onto the five key drivers of poverty including education and skills attainment. This drew upon the findings of a major Education and Poverty programme which concluded in 2014 with a review of evidence and solutions for Scotland by a team at Strathclyde University.<sup>5</sup>
2. JRF's latest state of the nation report on poverty in Scotland<sup>6</sup> highlights the trends for households on low incomes. This includes a set of indicators on education and skills. These are limited to some degree by the way official statistics are framed. While richer information on child development in the early years is available through, for example, the Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) study, data on attainment and achievement in school age is mostly reported by neighbourhood type based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The relationship between child poverty (at family level) and SIMD measures (area level) varies considerably across Scotland, making it a valuable but limited measure. To have a stronger grasp of how attainment is changing for children and young people in poverty, we need better data to be available more consistently showing the relationship with free school meal eligibility and take-up, outcomes for specific groups including children with Additional Support Needs and care-experienced children.
3. The available figures show a clear gap in attainment – shown here for reading and numeracy – for children at age 5 between families in neighbourhoods grouped by SIMD scores. In 2016-17, the gap in reaching the required P1 standard was 16% and 14% in reading and numeracy between households in the most and least disadvantaged places. This snapshot conceals a gap that in language and cognitive development identified by the age of two. The attainment gap continues to widen as children get older. At age 11, the gap was 21% for reading and 22% for literacy. These and other figures can be viewed at JRF's Data Dashboard<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/closing-attainment-gap-scottish-education>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2017>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.jrf.org.uk/data?f%5B0%5D=field\\_taxonomy\\_poverty\\_indicator%3A871](https://www.jrf.org.uk/data?f%5B0%5D=field_taxonomy_poverty_indicator%3A871)

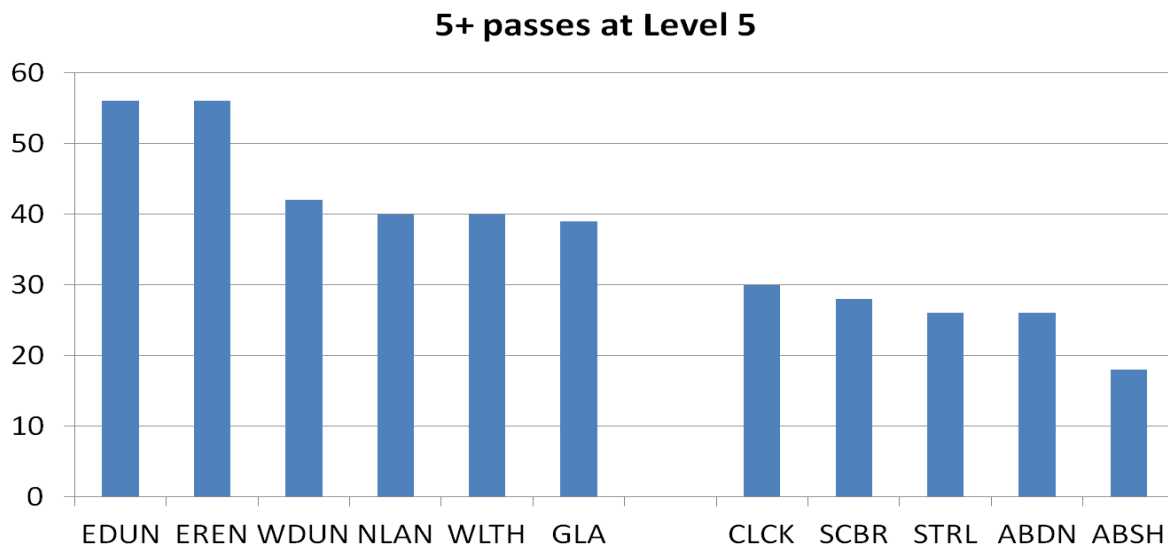


4. The percentage of school leavers in Scotland achieving at least one Level 5 qualifications increased from 77% in 2009-10 to 86% in 2015-16. The gap between children in the least and most deprived areas *reduced* from 33 to 20 percentage points in this period due to the improving performance in the most deprived areas.
5. Looking at a higher threshold of attainment – at least five passes at Level 5 – for children living in the most deprived neighbourhoods shows a highly variable picture. The Local Government Benchmarking Tool published by the Improvement Service<sup>8</sup> shows attainment on this measure across Scottish local authorities. Taking an average measure over three years helps to reduce variations caused by small numbers or single-year events. Figure x shows that in two local authorities, young people living in the most deprived areas have at least a 50% chance of attaining 5+ Level 5 passes. These are more affluent authorities with pockets of deprivation. About 40% of young people in the most deprived areas of the next group of authorities attain 5+ Level 5 passes, including those with higher rates of poverty in the west of Scotland. At the other end of the spectrum, the odds of attaining at this level for young people from similar backgrounds are much lower – between 20-30% in a geographically diverse group of authorities. While the number and characteristics of deprived areas varies across local authorities, this comparison suggests that attainment varies substantially within deprived areas. The reasons for this are not fully understood,

<sup>8</sup> Improvement Service Local Government Benchmarking Framework, indicator CHN6: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/list-of-indicators.html#cs>

but we can speculate that these are likely to include school leadership and culture, use of data to inform practice, improvements in teaching methods, targeted resourcing and relationships with families, communities and wider stakeholders.

**Young people in the most deprived areas attaining five or more Level 5 passes:  
variation by selected local authorities. 2014-16<sup>9</sup>**



6. We also know that attainment varies by ethnicity and gender. For example, at S4 average attainment among Chinese, Mixed Ethnicity and Indian Scots is higher than for their White-Scottish or British counterparts. It is similar for Scots of Pakistani background and lower than average among Scots of Black-African and 'Other' ethnic groups. Looking again at the most deprived neighbourhoods, the attainment gap is consistently lower (by 10 – 30 points) among minority ethnic pupils while BME girls outperform BME boys by an average of 15 points.
7. Action to reduce various elements of the attainment gap is needed in multiple settings - within, between and beyond schools (The Robert Owen Centre) and taking account of the age and stage of children. For example, international studies show that at age 7, parental/home influences are about five times more important for children's development than school influences. By age 11, these are broadly similar and by age 16, school effects are about four times more important<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> East Dunbartonshire (EDUN), East Renfrewshire (EREN), West Dunbartonshire (WDUN), North Lanarkshire (NLAN), West Lothian (WLTH), Glasgow (GLA), then Clackmannanshire (CLCK), Scottish Borders (SCBR), Stirling (STRL), Aberdeen City (ABDN) and Aberdeenshire (ABSH).

<sup>10</sup> Sacker et al (2002) 'Social Inequality in Educational Achievement and Psychological Adjustment throughout Childhood: Magnitude and Mechanisms.' *Social Science and Medicine*, 55: 863-880.



8. Closer partnerships between schools and families can help to reduce the gap in specific skills including children's reading<sup>11</sup>. When parents are helped to read to their children with support from high quality programmes, the gap in literacy standards is reduced modestly. When parents are helped to use specific techniques— e.g. pause, prompt, praise – a very significant reduction in the gap in children's reading ability can be achieved.
9. JRF has also explored the relationship between parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations<sup>12</sup>. This looked at how aspirations form among young people and families, in disadvantaged areas of Glasgow, Nottingham and London. It found that low-income families mostly have high aspirations, but they can go off-track quickly. This reflects the knowledge, connections and experiences of families, including the patchy quality of careers advice and work experience. To raise and maintain aspirations, the range and quality of opportunities available to young people from low income families must also be raised for example through earlier high quality subject choice and careers guidance, work taster opportunities, pathways to build know-how and help achieve goals and specific support mechanisms (e.g. financial, mentoring, Foundation Apprenticeships).
10. High quality public services including education make an essential contribution to solving poverty. Thanks to a recent review of international evidence<sup>13</sup>, we can also be confident that having an adequate income makes it easier to achieve a range of good outcomes for children. We know that poverty is strongly associated with poorer outcomes for many, but not all, who experience it. Families with short spells of poverty are likely to fare better than those in persistent or severe poverty. Those with other resources – for example savings, family members to help with money worries or with childcare – are likely to cope better. Poverty does not *determine* life chances, but it creates strong and often cumulative layers of risk.
11. How far does money matter for children's outcomes compared with early learning and childcare, raising attainment in schools or better support for parents? Which outcomes are more sensitive to family income than others? These are among the questions explored by a team at the London School of Economics and Political Science<sup>14</sup> with support from JRF over two waves of research in 2013 and 2017. The research included 61 relevant, high quality

<sup>11</sup> Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/182508/DFE-RR156.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182508/DFE-RR156.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> St Clair and Kintrea (2011) <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/influence-parents-places-and-poverty-educational-attitudes-and-aspirations>

<sup>13</sup> Kerris Cooper and Kitty Stewart (2017): [http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/\\_new/research/money\\_matters/report.asp](http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/money_matters/report.asp)

<sup>14</sup> Kerris Cooper and Kitty Stewart: [http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/\\_new/research/money\\_matters/report.asp](http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/money_matters/report.asp)



studies with clear evidence on whether money affects child outcomes. These span 30 years of evidence. Most of the studies were from the USA but other significant studies have been done in Canada, Australia, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Mexico as well as the UK. Despite a lack of studies from Scotland, the pathways by which a lack of money affects children's outcomes seem consistent across countries and equally relevant here: poverty drives parental stress, anxiety and especially maternal depression, material deprivation and a poorer home environment. Reductions in family income are likely to have wide-ranging negative effects. Long periods of poverty affect children's outcomes more severely than short spells.

12. Turning this round, what are the positive effects of families having more financial resources? A clear and consistent finding of the review is that more money does directly improve child development and that there is a significantly bigger effect for low income families: *"the overwhelming majority of studies find significant positive effects of increased family income across a range of children's outcomes, including cognitive development and school achievement, social and behavioural development and children's health"*.
  13. Some of these effects – notably for cognitive development - are stronger in early childhood. The impacts of increased income and spending similar amounts on *education programmes* appear broadly the same. Increases in family income for those on low incomes substantially help to reduce differences in school outcomes and wider aspects of child wellbeing. The researchers found that raising family incomes to the average for their household type would be expected to halve the attainment gap between children eligible for free school meals and others found in England at Key Stage 2.
  14. The evidence on *health* is now stronger than in 2013 thanks to a set of studies identifying positive income effects on birth weight in particular, although evidence is more mixed for later children's health outcomes including obesity and respiratory diseases. There is also further evidence of the positive effect of the American equivalent of working tax credits (Earned Income Tax Credits) on reducing maternal smoking, including during pregnancy.
  15. One particularly important new finding comes from the first study included in the review to consider the effects of income on *child abuse and neglect*. Allowing families to retain more of their child support payments rather than being deducted from benefits, was associated with significantly fewer investigations for child maltreatment. The authors single out this finding due to the devastating consequences of child maltreatment and the rigour of the study methodology
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16. What about *the means* by which more money enables better outcomes for children? Evidence for two main pathways is found:

- Family stress: new studies on maternal depression amplify earlier findings about the damaging effects of poverty on maternal mental health, itself a vital sign of child well-being and development.
- Family investment - the ability of parents to invest in support and goods that enhance child development. Unsurprising but significant are two new examples in Canada and the USA where a higher family income is associated with lower 'food insufficiency'.

17. If there is clear evidence of cause and effect between money and children's outcomes, we are still left to ask how much does money matter? What is the 'effect size' in these studies? Where this can be estimated, impacts seem to vary quite widely. With the exception of maternal depression (where a strong impact is seen), the effects are described as modest but comparing reasonably well to the impact of other approaches such as spending more on education.

18. This is an important and balanced conclusion for policy-makers in Scotland: money and high quality services both matter in broadly similar proportions when it comes to reducing child poverty. The authors find "*strong reasons to believe that reducing income poverty would itself have important and measurable effects both on children's [home] environment and on their development*".

19. Other approaches to improving the *prospects* of low-income children by improving learning environments at home, in nurseries and schools are essential. Scottish Government commitments to expanding early learning and childcare, reducing the attainment gap and expanding the supply of affordable housing will all help to improve children's life chances. However, very specific policy approaches on education, health or skills may have bounded (or 'domain-specific') effects. By comparison, addressing what's in the *pockets* of low income families affects different outcomes at the same time, spanning cognitive and behavioural, attainment, the home environment and health, including child anxiety and parental mental health.

20. When it comes to improving educational outcomes for children in Scotland, reducing child poverty should go hand in hand with the Attainment Challenge. Actions to reduce the attainment gap will be more effective if we do more to help families avoid and escape poverty.

Dr Jim McCormick - Associate Director Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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**Annexe D****EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE****Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty****Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change****Introduction**

It is widely accepted that pupils from more deprived backgrounds do less well educationally than their more advantaged peers (Francis and Perry 2010, The Sutton Trust, 2009, Wedge and Prosser 1973). There is evidence to suggest that particular interventions can have a short-term impact but sustaining and widening the impact is less well demonstrated (Greaves et al., 2014). Teacher quality/effectiveness has been shown to be a crucial element in promoting positive educational outcomes irrespective of social/economic background (Ko *et al.*, 2013) and in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, 'at risk' students learn at the same rate as those from advantaged backgrounds (Hamre & Pianta 2005).

The key message is that for improvement in academic outcomes for young people to occur there must be a focus on improvements in the quality of learning and teaching. This will involve the development of teachers' knowledge, skills and commitment and of their 'distributed, instructional and inquiry-minded leadership' (Mincu, 2013). Evidence from the Sutton Trust, and other work such as that of Hattie (2008), suggests that effective learning strategies to tackle education inequity include: High quality feedback to pupils; peer-tutoring; developing thinking skills (meta-cognition) and a focus on Early Years.

However, it is also clear that while schools can and do make a difference to the outcomes of young people, with schools accounting for around 18-50% of the variance after background factors have been taken into account (cf. Sammons, 2007), as Basil Bernstein (1970) reminds us education alone cannot compensate for society and that we need to tackle structural factors that have a powerful and often critical impact on outcomes of some students.

The framework of within-, between- and beyond- was initially developed for new models of school leadership (Chapman *et al.*, 2008); we now apply it within the context of improvement to provide an overview of key themes from research and supplement this with some specific examples of practice. Taking each in turn:

**(i) Within-school Improvement**

First, schools should invest in teachers' professional development so that teachers develop a wide repertoire of teaching skills that can reflect the range of needs of their learners. Second, a focus on building leadership capacity at all levels within the school is key to success, as is leaders promoting a culture underpinned by high expectations and positive norms in staff and pupils. One strategy for achieving the above is to use collaborative action research (CAR) and other forms of structured enquiry to identify priorities for change, implement improvement strategies and track and monitor the impact of these interventions. This process can also inform the school's planning and strategic action. This type of approach is exemplified in the School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP), Raising Attainment for All (RAFA) and Network for Social and Educational Equity (NSEE).

In terms of teaching and learning, policies designed to close the attainment gap should balance promoting curricula interventions such as literacy and mathematics programmes with developing the highest quality learning and teaching in classrooms. An over-reliance on specific curriculum interventions and “off-the shelf” resources is misguided unless teachers understand how these work, how they can be adapted to suit the context and most importantly that the intervention is underpinned by the highest quality teaching methods. This is a risk for the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) where, quite rightly, schools are eager to demonstrate an impact on learning outcomes quickly and can be tempted to ‘buy in a solution’ by adopting an intervention that is seen to work elsewhere without framing it within their own context, relevance to their curriculum, learner needs or capacity or capability for effective implementation. In addition to focusing on the learning level schools should also invest in building leadership capacity and promoting authentic relationships between schools and families and communities.

In terms of building leadership capacity, international educational research and practice demonstrates that the most effective school/ system improvement efforts are locally owned and led by practitioners and leaders working in partnership and collaboration with like-minded professionals and other stakeholders (e.g. Fullan 2013, Chapman et al. 2012, Chapman and Hadfield 2010, Donaldson 2012, Ainscow et al., 2012, OFSTED, 2000; Harris et al, 2005, Hadfield and Chapman 2009; Kerr et al. 2003). They align their change processes with curriculum development, teacher development and school self-evaluation (Menter et al., 2010). Potter and colleagues’ (2002) review of the literature on ‘what works’ in school improvement in challenging circumstances again highlights the importance of school organisation, culture, leadership and ethos, to improve the levels of effectiveness.

The research literature and our own evidence, particularly from the SIPP and NSEE programmes, have highlighted that school improvement strategies that promote new ways of working for learning and teaching and building leadership capacity across classrooms, schools and local authorities that have a positive impact on tackling poverty related attainment are framed by the following principles, in that they:

- Adopt partnership working with a focus on exploring specific issues relating to educational inequity
- Use Collaborative Action Research (CAR) and a range of evidence to identify key challenges, frame key questions experiment and monitor developments to inform practice and understand impact
- Create leadership opportunities and promote professional learning of staff at all levels.
- Ensure efforts are locally owned and led with opportunities for staff at all levels to participate and contribute to the direction and leadership of the activity
- Understand that activity is tailored to individual needs and is context specific
- Invest time and space to build positive relationships and have a commitment to reciprocity and mutual benefit for all involved
- Develop arrangements to support long-term collaboration and new approaches to capacity building, so sustaining and building in effective approaches

- Have explicit links to strategic improvement planning in schools and local authorities
- Involve a range of relevant partners and draw on external expertise where necessary.

Evidence and experience suggests there is no single magic bullet that will close the attainment gap, or more broadly 'deliver' school improvement. Rather, adherence to the above principles with a focus on a small number of priorities, targeted at individuals and small groups, are key. For example, the evaluation of the Extra Mile programme found that there was a significant positive difference in GCSE points between students in receipt of free school meals involved in the programme and a matched sample of students not on the programme. This difference also equated to a 22% reduction on the IDACI scale or an 8% attendance rate (Chapman *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, to ensure effective implementation, and ultimately impact on outcomes, strategies also need to be matched to the specific context, capacity and capability of the school.

### **(ii) Between-school Improvement**

This domain builds on and extends the within-school approaches and principles to involve partner schools and organisations in order to promote professional learning and coordination of systems to tackle inequality. By bringing together other schools and partners to the collaborative, there is greater scope for mutual support, innovation and sharing of ideas and evidence of 'what works' (Chapman, 2018). There can be benefits from economies of scale and the coordination of effort can also enhance collective motivation across teachers and partners. Movement of key staff around the collaborative helps to identify issues and support capacity building, succession planning and career management.

Structured collaboration between schools helps raise attainment. The evidence suggests that Federations involving higher and lower attaining schools significantly outperform non-federated counterparts, although this takes two to four years to impact on student outcomes and there is a positive impact on student attainment in both the higher and lower attaining schools. Also, secondary school federations outperform 'loose' collaboratives and executive leadership arrangements outperform traditional leadership arrangements. Effective leadership by the headteacher and senior leadership team has been found to be the single most critical feature that helps to generate improvements and build capacity for such federations to be sustained (Chapman and Muijs, 2013).

Between-school partnerships can also involve a process of collaborative inquiry which supports and informs experimentation with practice and evaluating impact, but also creates leadership and professional learning opportunities. Such joint practice development can be a key feature of 'Research Schools' acting as a hub to move knowledge, expertise and evidence around the system. Having a number of partners also tends to improve schools' access to support, advice and expertise regarding CAR methods, use of data, pedagogy and assessment.

In addition to the principles and characteristics stated previously, it is important that there is sufficient time allocated to foster clear understanding of goals and to build relationships and promote an ethos of reciprocal learning and improvement. While this process can be strategically informed, it is important that the teachers in the partner schools have the commitment to collaborate with their partners and can see

a rationale for this. School improvement that tackles inequality is much more likely to emerge as a result of collective capacity building across schools than through centrally driven top-down mandates underpinned by accountability mechanisms.

Meta reviews of the research evidence such as that by Mincu (2016) have found that the approaches adopted by SIPP and NSEE feature in successful strategies to tackle the achievement gap and educational inequity. For example, they have a strong focus on collaboratively developed and evaluated learning and teaching approaches and this shared professional knowledge is key to ensuring both effective learning processes and whole school improvement.

### **(iii) Beyond-school Improvement**

Our research and support for collaborative networks of schools together with insights from our international networks confirms that while there is encouraging evidence for within- and between- school improvement as mechanisms to tackle educational inequity and attainment, this is a necessary but insufficient ingredient for success. A more coordinated holistic approach is required if we are to tackle poverty and the attainment gap. There is evidence that to make a greater and sustained impact on the poverty related attainment gap these education collaborations need to extend to include other partners and services beyond education to provide a more holistic approach. For example, research (e.g. Egan, 2013; Carter-Wall and Whitfield, 2012) has also highlighted that we also need to look beyond learning and teaching to address issues of pupil wellbeing; enrichment experiences; engaging parents and families in their children's learning; and strengthening links with communities. Indeed, this research shows that parental and family engagement is the most important factor, outside of schools, in influencing the achievement of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This activity can also have positive outcomes for the parents, including promoting their skills and facilitating access to support networks.

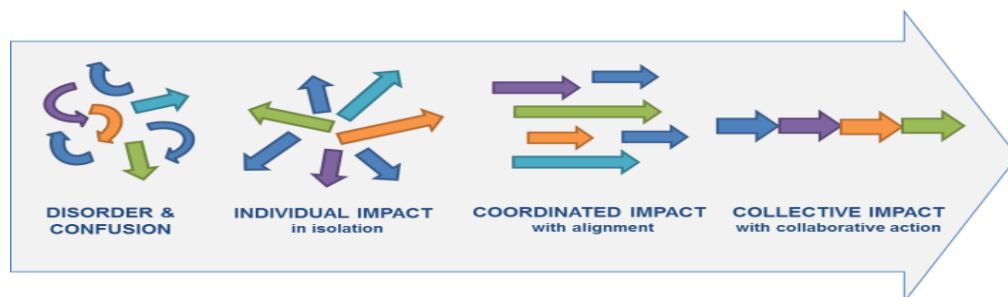
Therefore, effective multi-agency partnership working is crucial to tackle educational inequity. Such partnerships enable schools to support school-family links, out-of-hours learning and mentoring interventions. Grayson (2013) found that such holistic interventions involving strong engagement between parents, schools and the wider community are necessary to narrow the attainment gap. Partnership working between a range of local services offers more opportunities to reach the most vulnerable families, as any service with which they are in contact can refer those families to supportive interventions. Schools have a key role to play here, often as network coordinators and co-deliverers of services to improve outcomes.

Partnership working between a range of local services offers more opportunities to reach the most vulnerable families and, if necessary, refer to other services. This can offer a co-ordinated approach to public service provision and integration of health, social and education services. Building such partnerships takes time but we have found that the benefits to local people in challenging high poverty circumstances are clear. This includes supporting parents and carers with fundamental needs so that their children can access and thrive in education. Co-location of services facilities, more reliable channels of communication and effective partnerships allow earlier intervention and a 'pipe-line of support across transition stages', with more effective access to resources. This was demonstrated in our research evaluating the Renfrewshire Family First initiative (Hall *et al* 2017).

Taking a place-based perspective is a key dimension of beyond school improvement and there is growing evidence that this approach is an important lever for tackling intergenerational poverty and promoting a broad range of positive outcomes in a range of international contexts. For example, *City Connects* in Boston, MA works across 84 schools. The model brings together education, health, welfare and other services and has erased two-thirds of the achievement gap in math and half the achievement gap in English. The model adopts a whole child approach drawing on research that shows that students achieve better in school and in life when they are “educated across multiple dimensions—intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical”. An independent evaluation has also demonstrated that the model provides significant financial savings. (City Connects 2014).

In their review of ‘collective impact’ Henig and colleagues (2015) argue that collective impact involves all services are working together so that the totality of impact is greater than the sum of the parts (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: Service provision and collective impact**



(Henig *et al.*, 2015)

Five key principles underpin the concept of collective impact:

- **Common agenda:** All members of the collaborative need a shared understanding of the issue and an agreed approach to tackling it.
- **Shared data and accountability systems:** For alignment and accountability purposes, those involved need to have common indicators of success.
- **Mutually reinforcing agendas and activities:** Action needs to be co-ordinated to avoid overlap and gaps.
- **Clear and consistent communication:** In order to build relationships and trust, establish common objectives, and build shared purpose and a guiding.
- **Backbone support organisation:** A separate organisation is required to provide the administrative, logistical, and coordinating support necessary to create and sustain a successful partnership.

Our research and development work for Children's Neighbourhood Scotland (CNS) presents a significant opportunity for tackling child poverty and improving outcomes. CNS is a Scottish example of taking a place-based approach to tackle child poverty and improve outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. To date, this approach has involved ROC, Policy Scotland and What Works Scotland at the University of Glasgow and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) working in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Clyde Gateway and other local and national third sector and private organisations in the Bridgeton and Dalmarnock areas to harness the power of local networks and help bring together people, resources and organisations in the neighbourhood area, so that all can work together

to promote better lives for the children living there. There is a strong focus on supporting young people's transitions over the long term with an emphasis on local voices. This work is complex and, given the diversity of stakeholders, has required significant investment in building and sustaining trusting relationships to deliver the intended outcomes. This work has provided a strong foundation for moving forward as we enter the next phase of CNS as the model is embedded and extended across Scotland. For further details please see <https://childrensneighbourhoodsscotland.com>

### **Concluding remarks**

It is clear that many of the features of within-, between- and beyond- school improvement align with the best available research evidence and are key to closing the attainment gap. Whilst this is encouraging, in order to justify the allocation of public funds, policies and programmes in Scotland need to move to a position where they can establish the extent of their impact from independent sources sooner rather than later.

More broadly, each domain of the framework cannot be taken in isolation, nor can it be thought about as a linear or hierarchical framework for change and improvement. All three areas: within-, between- and beyond- must be worked on together, complimenting and reinforcing each other to create synergies and additionality rather than contradicting or competing with each other, and in doing so undermining efforts. Ultimately, the success of pulling all parts of this framework together and optimizing impact requires clear, consistent, collaborative leadership within and between services. When this is achieved then we will have successfully operationalised the intent of the Christie Commission (2011) across Scotland and gone some way to creating a more equitable education system where all can achieve despite where they come from.

### **For further information please contact Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change:**

Centre Manager Patricia Wallace at [patricia.wallace@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.wallace@glasgow.ac.uk)

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## **EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE**

**11th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5), Wednesday, 18 April 2018**

### **Additional Submissions Pack**

#### **Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty**

##### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the submissions received after the original submissions pack was circulated on the 6<sup>th</sup> April. These submissions have been put in the following annexes and added to the original pack online. A link to the full pack is [here](#). A list of all the submissions are listed in [Annexe E](#)

Please note that the submissions which came in after the 6<sup>th</sup> April from the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation are both in paper 2 of this week's Committee papers.

- [Annexe A Culture Counts](#)
- [Annexe B Reading Wise](#)
- [Annexe C Youth Scotland](#)
- [Annexe D Anonymous Teacher 6](#)

## Annexe A

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

## Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

## Culture Counts

**How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?**

- 1 Culture Counts works on behalf of a group of core members to place culture at the heart of policy making. The organisation and its members are committed to working openly and collaboratively.
- 2 We understand that the Scottish Government are working to close the gap in attainment particularly where there is a significant gap between those living in the most disadvantaged areas (bottom 20% SIMD) and the least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD). We were shocked to see an 80% gap in exclusion rates between the most disadvantaged (95.2%) and least disadvantaged (15.2%) in secondary school age children. The cultural sector has an important role to play in Education and we can contribute to attainment in English and Maths; while making an important contribution to improving the mental health of young people which we understand to be a major part of how exclusion happens<sup>1</sup>. Cultural education is not an additional but an essential component to ensuring that our young people achieve and that they are confident, responsible effective contributors who can express themselves well and in a range of ways.
- 3 The charity Sistema Scotland works in deprived areas of Glasgow, Stirling and Aberdeen. It provides an intensive orchestral programme for school-age children and young people with the aim of changing lives fostering confidence, discipline, teamwork, pride and aspiration in those taking part. Entry to and participation in the programme is free and includes instruments, lessons, snacks and day trips. The key findings of a recent evaluation were that participation in the programme increased school attendance and attainment rates, improved emotional wellbeing and aspirations to healthy living, and supported the acquisition of skills for work and life including self-discipline, time management and organisation<sup>2</sup>.
- 4 The Scottish Government allocates £10 million per year to deliver the Youth Music Initiative. This aims to create access to high-quality music-making opportunities for young people aged 0-25 years, particularly for those who would not normally have the chance to participate. A recent evaluation of the YMI concluded that it is contributing to building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequalities by engaging those who wouldn't normally get involved, particularly young people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage<sup>3</sup>.

1 <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-10/making-the-difference-summary-october-2017.pdf>

2 [http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5059/Sistema\\_summary\\_updated.pdf](http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5059/Sistema_summary_updated.pdf)

- 5 There remains a disparity of opportunity in one-to-one instrumental music instruction (for those studying for standard grade and higher grades) at secondary school level. Music as a subject is non-statutory; this creates localised disparity of opportunity as those in more affluent areas enjoy music instruction as paid for by parents and guardians whereas those in areas of deprivation have little access to one-to-one tuition<sup>4</sup>. Scottish Government Teacher Census data shows that Scottish schools have lost over three hundred and fifty music instruction teachers since 2007<sup>5</sup>.
- 6 Evidence points to gains in attainment in a range of subjects because of studying the arts. A 2015 literature review commissioned by CASE found that the evidence points to a positive relationship between arts and educational impacts<sup>6</sup>. This study highlights a link between increased self-esteem and attitudes towards education, improved educational values and relationships with teachers. One-third of young people in the youth justice system who completed Summer Arts Colleges moved up a level in literacy and numeracy<sup>7</sup>. Young people using libraries read above the expected level for their age; young people who don't use libraries read below the expected level<sup>8</sup>. In the US, large cohort studies of 25,000 students undertaken by James Catterall show that taking part in arts activities increases student attainment in maths and literacy, with particularly striking results for students from low- income families<sup>9&10</sup>. Teenagers and young adults of low socio-economic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrolment and attainment<sup>11</sup>. Other studies echo these results, with Ruppert finding that students who take arts classes have higher maths and verbal SAT scores than students who take no arts classes<sup>12</sup>.

3 [http://www.creativescotland.com/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/32754/YMI-Evaluation-ExecutiveSummary.pdf](http://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/32754/YMI-Evaluation-ExecutiveSummary.pdf)

4 EIS Councillor Briefing Music in Schools January 2018

5 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/teachcenssuppdata>

6

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/416279/A\\_review\\_of\\_the\\_Social\\_Impacts\\_of\\_Culture\\_and\\_Sport.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416279/A_review_of_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf)

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8 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED515944.pdf>

9 [https://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/21545-Doing\\_Well\\_and\\_Doing\\_Good.pdf](https://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/21545-Doing_Well_and_Doing_Good.pdf)

10 <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

11 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

12 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ695662.pdf>

**Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?**

Those working across the cultural sector are frequently brought-in (as additional support) for short-term or one-off visits within the education system. Culture Counts members would like to work more closely and strategically with the education sector to enable practitioners to work for longer with targeted young people so that they are able to pass on skills as well as the opportunity to experience and participate (in a long-term accessible structured way). Young people who are part of the exclusion statistics are less likely to choose arts subjects which is unfortunate as they could possibly have the most to gain from taking part<sup>13</sup>.

Culture Counts would be interested in working with the Education and Skills Committee to try to better align equality of access to cultural skills; supporting the sector to work regularly, strategically and long-term within the most deprived areas within Scotland would be to the benefit of everyone.

13 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/25/squeezing-out-arts-for-commercially-useful-subjects-will-make-our-culture-poorer>

**Annexe B****EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE****Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty****Reading Wise****ReadingWise - Introduction**

ReadingWise welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee's call for evidence on the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty. We would be pleased to brief the Committee in person on the issues we raise in this submission and eager to arrange a Committee visit to a Scottish school to see the ReadingWise initiative in action, should this be considered useful.

We welcome the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government's continued interest in improving reading, highlighted by this week's announcement of the extension of the First Minister's Reading Challenge. The desire to improve attainment for school children experiencing poverty aligns particularly well with ReadingWise.

The focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap, placing excellence and equality at the heart of Scottish education, will help to ensure that there are many opportunities to accelerate targeted improvement in literacy.

Therefore, we have focused our submission on what we view as the opportunities for Scotland, based on our experiences in schools across the UK, including in Scotland.

**ReadingWise – About**

Founded in 2009 and operating in Scotland since 2015, ReadingWise is a collaborative programme which helps school children who have struggled to learn to read.

The ReadingWise programme:

- Is proven to rapidly improve reading age and self-esteem
- Can progress reading age by at least nine months in 20 hours (Scottish evidence is ahead of this average)
- Has helped over 16,000 pupils across the UK improve their reading
- Is currently used in over 100 Scottish schools, helping the lowest 20% of performers at reading
- Is a highly collaborative programme, delivered by schools for schools, and implemented by existing teaching assistants
- Is an empowering programme – no ReadingWise personnel are in the school, staff are trained and skills embedded
- Uses unique techniques – it is much more than phonics, and improvement is not simply a case of doing more of the same
- Can cost as little as £35 per pupil, if delivered at scale

**ReadingWise in Scotland:**

- ReadingWise is currently being delivered to varying degrees in 15 local authority areas in Scotland
- It is being used by 106 primary and secondary schools
- ReadingWise has improved the reading age of 4,631 Scottish pupils
- The average reading age of Scottish pupils has increased by 9.3 months after only 10 hours of ReadingWise activity

ReadingWise is well placed for use in Scottish schools to the benefit of struggling pupils. It fits in neatly with the Scottish Attainment Challenge and is ideal expenditure for a school under the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). ReadingWise can help Scottish schools to ensure that literacy skills are prioritised, while streamlining and decreasing teacher workload pressure.

**ReadingWise – supporting the educational attainment of children and young people, what has worked well and barriers to success**

Good literacy unlocks other areas of the curriculum. It is therefore widely recognised as the most important educational outcome for children. However, with poor literacy, children are locked out and their attainment suffers.

The work of ReadingWise in Scotland has supported over 4,600 pupils, identified as struggling with poor literacy, to improve their reading ability and therefore improve their educational attainment more widely. In addition to the quantitative data is the significant improvement in self-esteem and associated engagement across the school, with improved behaviour and motivation consistently reported.

The first criterion of success in our work is the people we work with to deliver our programmes. These people range from local authority Quality Improvement Officers, to headteachers, to teaching assistants. It is these people who are a critical resource, and their hard work and belief drives the success of the children we work with.

Conversely, where staff lack belief or motivation, we see a reduction in the positive benefits to struggling readers. This lack of belief should be considered a key barrier to success, one which we overcome through quality training and evidence-basing of our programme. As our programmes begin to take, the motivation and belief is self-reinforcing as staff see for themselves the step change in their pupils' reading, their attitude and their self-belief. The success is then amplified as teachers communicate across clusters and local authorities.

Another factor in our success is efficiency. Teacher workload is a serious problem, in part responsible for the recruitment issues facing Scottish schools. We work to minimise workload, allowing teachers to focus on the pupils. Reporting and accountability are handled by the system in a robust and streamlined way.

**ReadingWise – services that we have not been able to provide that we believe would work**



ReadingWise is currently being delivered in 15 local authority areas in Scotland and is being used by 106 primary and secondary schools. However, we believe that we could reach many more and the programme is designed to offer a viable national initiative where useful.

The primary factor preventing us from a more significant expansion in Scotland is the difficulty we have in reaching headteachers, which is the flip-side of the lack of visibility headteachers themselves have of the range of options available to them under PEF.

Furthermore, the lack of consistency over how much autonomy a headteacher has over the spending of PEF, which appears to vary by local authority, provides a significant barrier to efficient access for ReadingWise and other providers. This is, ultimately, detrimental to pupils, who are not currently exposed to the full range of educational solutions available in this thriving sector.

**ReadingWise - our work with schools and local authorities to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult**

ReadingWise's work with schools is often in partnership with the local authority. The key factor in working successfully with schools are positive relationships amongst colleagues. For example, a successful initiative needs the buy in of both school leaders and teachers.

We have learnt that pilot phases can prove effective to support this. Once a small, but influential, group of headteachers or teachers are seeing positive outcomes, then scaling the programme to other schools becomes much more effective.

Conversely, we believe that it can be a mistake for a local authority to buy in resources centrally if there is not a very clear understanding of what is needed across its group of schools. Successful local authority roll-outs involve collaborative and inclusive processes, whereas unsuccessful roll-outs are often characterised by a centralised, top-down approach where the fit between solution and problem is less clear, and the backing of those teachers who will deliver is less certain. We have found that this often leads to resentment or reluctance to deliver the programmes effectively – which can have negative consequences on the efficacy of the programme and therefore the impact on pupils' education.

**ReadingWise - What we believe could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty**

The political focus on supporting the attainment and achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty is very welcome.

Technology provides many great opportunities to ensure that the right literacy programmes are reaching the right pupils quickly and efficiently. Programmes like ReadingWise reduce teacher workload and increase the number of pupils reached by allowing a single teaching assistant to work with ten children at a time. This saves

time and money and greatly extends the reach of literacy programmes, leading to better outcomes for a greater number of pupils.

There is the opportunity to capitalise on the benefits offered by technology to this group of children and young people. However, this requires bold action. There is often a reluctance to be bold and instead rely on antiquated approaches to solving the literacy problem. Such outdated approaches cannot reach the numbers required, and often add to teacher workload – leading to poor outcomes and staff dissatisfaction.

### **ReadingWise – Conclusion**

ReadingWise welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Committee and highlight, from our perspective, the opportunities for Scotland to improve attainment for school children experiencing poverty.

At present, we believe that independent initiatives, such as ReadingWise, present invaluable solutions to Scottish schools.

However, there is significant room for improvement in terms of encouraging, facilitating and supporting schools in empowering them to be confident, take bold steps to bolster attainment and help overcome the debilitating consequences of poverty.

**Jamie Fries**  
**ReadingWise**  
**22 March 2018**

## Annexe C

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

**Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty****Youth Scotland**

Youth Scotland would like to thank the Scottish Parliament Education Committee for the opportunity to contribute towards this Inquiry. Youth Scotland is Scotland's national charity supporting the delivery of community-based youth work. We believe that every young person has potential and high quality community-based youth work helps young people to realise their potential. We deliver a range of projects and services which support a network of over 1,100 youth groups running in diverse communities the length and breadth of Scotland. These groups work with over 64,000 young people aged 8 – 25 years old. Young people are supported by more than 7,500 passionate and committed youth workers, of whom nearly 5,000 are volunteers.

**1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?**

Community-based youth work is well placed to support the objective of closing the attainment gap because of the holistic approach which underpins quality youth work. We know it is this long term approach based on building relationships that lays the foundation for good youth work, as outlined in the defining nature and purpose of youth work:

- Young people choose to participate
- The work must build from where young people are
- Youth work recognises the young person and the worker as partners in the learning process

A relationship between a young person and youth work is different from those with parents and teachers. Through these relationships youth workers are able to work with young people to support them, wherever possible, to overcome the issues that are impacting on their ability to succeed. This can range from supporting young people to re-engage in school or to identify alternative learner pathways that will enable them to attain qualifications and achieve their potential.

*Youth work offers an opportunity for young people to participate on their own terms, when they want to and where they want to. A good youth worker is clear about their intent and understands their role as an informal educator. They believe that all children and young people want to learn but we need to create the right conditions for them to do so. This may be about providing a listening ear when things are tough at home, creating a bit of time out away from the community in which they live or creating a group work programme where they can learn along with their peers in an informal setting.*

Dona Milne, Youth Scotland Chair and Consultant in Public Health

A recently published systematic review of research<sup>1</sup> found that universal youth work can lead to positive health and wellbeing outcomes for young people through providing “safe yet challenging spaces for personal and social development and intercultural learning” (2015: 74).

Youth Scotland supports our member groups, youth workers and young people through:

- High quality training and development programmes for youth workers
- Support to set-up youth groups
- Leadership programmes for young people
- National youth work projects for young people
- Nationally recognised accreditation for young people’s achievements through
  - Hi5 Awards for children aged 5+;
  - Dynamic Youth Awards which are for young people aged 10+; and
  - Youth Achievement Awards at levels Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum which are for young people aged 14+ (16+ for Platinum).

Through completing these awards, young people develop a range of personal and social skills, increasing their confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, communication, problem solving and leadership skills. They also develop study skills through planning, recording, reviewing and evidencing their learning.

Youth Scotland’s Awards are externally quality assured by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and levelled on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) from levels 2 (Hi5 Award) through to level 7 (Platinum Youth Achievement Award). The Youth Achievement Awards are an SQA customised-award which means their achievement is included in a young person’s SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate. Between 2002 and 31 March 2017, we have recognised the achievements of young people with over 46,000 awards being achieved.

Young people have told us themselves what difference achieving a Youth Scotland Award has had on their lives, from inspiring them to go on to University, to giving them the confidence that they can achieve even if they have not done well in school. A selection of these stories and videos can be found on our website and YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/media/1224/ys-awards-supporting-young-people-to-achieve-their-potential-their-stories-web.pdf>

<https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-stories/youth-scotland-s-awards-their-stories/>

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<sup>1</sup> McGregor, C. (2015). Universal Youth Work: A critical review of the literature. University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh

**2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?**

We know from our members' feedback that there are missed opportunities for schools to work in partnership with community-based youth groups in their local area. Further detail is provided in question 3 below.

**3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?**

In our recent members' survey, we asked youth groups to share with us their knowledge of and experience of being involved in efforts to close the attainment gap. While all of those who responded stated their desire and readiness to work with schools to support young people to fulfil their potential, there was only a very small number who reported that they are working in partnership with schools. It was clear from the responses of those people who have been successful in developing partnerships with schools that this has been the result of existing awareness and positive relationships at local levels. (A copy of our survey report is included with this response).

We also know from our direct delivery of projects and youth awards that relationships with key personnel in schools and local authorities are an important factor in working together to tackle the attainment gap. From our experience, the value of our Awards is helpful as their achievement makes a clear and measurable contribution towards closing the attainment gap, through their levelling on the Credit and Qualifications Framework and associated Insight Tariff points.

**4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?**

*Looking beyond the school gate*

If we are to achieve our objective of closing the attainment gap, then reforms need to account for the fact that a significant proportion (estimated to be between 80-85%) of a young person's learning happens outwith classroom and school settings.

Young people have a range of learning styles and there needs to be recognition of how community- based youth work contributes towards young people being able to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. These skills will not solely be developed in the classroom. Youth Scotland's Awards provide a valuable measure of young people's learning and personal development, with many young people taking a pathway through the levels of award, from Dynamic Youth (at level 3) through to Platinum Youth Achievement (at level 7). In many cases, these awards recognise and accredit young people's informal learning opportunities and there are numerous examples of young people, particularly those living in areas of deprivation, achieving higher level Youth Achievement Awards at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7 who do not always achieve equivalent qualifications through formal education. These, and other youth awards, must be taken into account when measuring progress in closing the attainment gap.

The proposals for establishing a Headteachers' Charter and requirements for Pupil Participation should also include specific recognition of young people's experiences and achievements outwith school in youth work settings and how this positively benefits their attainment within school. Going forward, it is essential that schools and community-based youth groups are supported to develop effective partnerships which can enable young people to achieve their potential, including attaining qualifications in and achieving beyond school. Therefore it is vital that the final suite of performance measures for closing the attainment gap does not inadvertently lead to these relationships being stifled or unnecessary obstacles put in their way. It would be an indicator of clear progress in recognising the value of community-based youth work if the performance measures sought to reinforce partnership working between schools and youth groups.

Alongside this written submission, we would also draw the committee's attention to a short [report on a survey of youth groups' experience of engaging in the Attainment Challenge](#) along with young people's stories of the impact of completing youth awards at the following link:

<https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-stories/youth-scotland-s-awards-their-stories/>

**Mark McGeachie**  
**Head of Partnerships & Sustainability**  
**Youth Scotland**  
**22 March 2018**

**Anonymous Submissions****EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE****Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty  
Teacher 6**

- 1. What has your school done to support children from families affected by poverty? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?**
2. My current school employs child & family support workers to connect with parents and support issues in the home. They may support parents with transport to and from school meetings and events, but also to appointments out with school (for example, CAMHS). We have 'settled start' in the mornings, where pupils can access breakfast and staff can check-in to see how their evening/morning has been. We have offered family learning sessions for various things, including cooking, play and curriculum developments. School staff have regular contact with families and may signpost them to other community supports. Our school is attachment-led and provides greater levels of emotional support than a mainstream school (i.e. nurture provision, key teachers who check in with specific pupils every day, individualised curriculums with opportunities for outdoor learning and wider achievements) I have previously worked in a different local authority as part of a homelink team working with parents/carers of children under 'looked after and accommodated at home' status. We were trained to deliver the Triple P parenting course to groups or individuals. Members of the team carried out home visits, particularly where school attendance was concerning. We provided transport support in the short term for some pupils to get to school and workers also supported families to access food banks, recycled furniture suppliers etc. Although the remit of the team was to improve educational attainment, it was clear that families could not address this without their basic needs being addressed first (Maslow's hierarchy stuff). I feel support works well when it's at a community level, non-judgemental and there is an expectation that families will require an element of emotional support. This is mirrored by the support pupils require in school. If we do not address the health and well-being of children and families first, they will not be in a position that engages in anything wider.
- 3. Are there any services that your school has not been able to provide that you believe would work?**
4. Currently, we do not have a school counselling service or direct access to one. The majority (if not all) of our pupils have experienced trauma. 55% have 4 or more adverse childhood experiences (87% have 2 or more) and many have diagnosed conditions such as ASD or ADHD. 69% of families live in SIMD 1-4 and many of the others are looked after away from home (therefore living in accommodation in areas 4+ but not necessarily from these areas). I know of very few children who are engaging in any regular work with psychological services, despite their emotional wellbeing/behaviour being a

huge barrier to their educational engagement. Many of these young people are already in the youth justice system. Two are on orders which require tags. I am continually concerned about the lack of access to psychological services, counselling etc. Many are discharged as a result of non-engagement, but as a professional who has contact with them every school day, building trusting relationships is key. We can access some services via the local authority, but it has a large waiting list and therefore limited time for practitioners to attempt to make progress with reluctant children. I would also be concerned about the level of psychological support parents are able to access in order to support their children, as they are clearly affected by not only poverty-related issues themselves, but the subsequent impact on their child.

**5. How do services provided outside of school support families who are affected by poverty help with educational attainment?**

6. The benefits system seems to be a real nightmare for many families, with sanctions being placed and processes adding to stress and trauma. I know of a single mother who has experienced domestic abuse and finds her sons very challenging at home (one has an ADHD diagnosis and is in a specialist school provision for his behaviour). The family are engaging in work with women's aid and the mother is trying unbelievably hard to turn things around. However, one morning she called the school to say that she would not be eating for a week due to issues receiving money. She would make sure her boys had enough, but she would go without. We tried to support her to a Food bank, but the stigma was too much for her. Unsurprisingly, there was a serious incident involving her and her son that weekend. If we can't support these families with the basics, educational attainment will be too far along the list of priorities.

**7. What else could be done to support the attainment of children and young people from families affected by poverty?**

8. Better, clearer multi-agency working between school, health and social work. Often when educational progress is seen in pupils, changes in their home life can impact hugely and we see regression. They do not have the resilience to 'bounce back' due to their early life experiences and decision-making in the social work/care system can be slow, which results in schools struggling to meet the child's needs in an interim or long term basis. Social work teams seem to be overloaded so do not have as much face to face contact with families and therefore cannot support them. Family learning is highlighted in HGIOS 4, but more needs to be done to ensure a consistent national picture will look like (i.e. some early years family hubs are doing excellent work, that does not link in to Primary or secondary so families are 'lost'). Schools need effective resources and strong links to other agencies to do family learning well and more needs to be done to ensure that schools and teachers understand the impact. More research needs to be done into measuring holistic impact of family learning, as the majority is literacy-based. Many examples of effective Scottish family learning are case studies and there is less empirical data.



9. Research into adverse childhood experiences would be welcomed by professionals in Scotland, particularly looking at how this lens can benefit learning approaches.

**Annexe E**

**[Link to Submissions Pack](#)**

**List of Organisations and Submissions**

**Submissions have been received from:**

- The Scottish Government
- Education Scotland
- Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland
- The Education Endowment Foundation
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- The Poverty Alliance
- Poverty Truth Commission
- Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change

**Local Government Submissions**

- COSLA
- 1 in 5, City of Edinburgh Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- The Northern Alliance

**School Submissions**

- Dalmarnock Primary School
- Kelvinside Academy
- Tynecastle High School 1 in 5 group

**Submissions from Unions**

- AHDS
- EIS
- NASUWT
- School Leaders Scotland
- UNISON

**Submissions from Parent Representatives**

- Connect
- The National Parent Forum of Scotland

**Submissions from Children's Representative/ Charities**

- Aberlour
- Barnardo's Scotland
- Children 1st

- Children in Scotland
- Children's Parliament
- Children's University Scotland
- Includem
- Save The Children
- Scottish Youth Parliament

### **Other Organisations working with Children, Young People and Families**

- The Church of Scotland
- CLD Standards Council
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Generations Working Together
- Home-Start UK
- Learning Link Scotland
- The Princes Trust
- Scouts Scotland
- Scottish Outdoor Education Centre
- Stretch a Nickel Foundation
- The Spark
- Young Scot
- Youth Link Scotland
- Youth Scotland

### **Submissions from Further and Higher Education**

- Colleges Scotland
- Heriot- Watt University
- Universities Scotland
- University of Stirling

### **Other Organisations**

- The Awards Network
- Axiom Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd
- CELCIS
- Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER)
- Culture Counts
- Edinburgh International Science Festival
- Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Glasgow Centre for Population Health
- National Theatre of Scotland
- NHS Scotland- Facing up to Poverty Practice Network
- NHS Health Scotland
- RSE
- Scottish Library and Information Council
- Social Work Scotland
- Sumdog

### **Submissions from Academics**

1. Dr Lynne Duncan and Dr Sarah McGeown
2. Professor Stephen Gorard FRSA FAcSS
3. Andrew Green
4. Professor Grant Jarvie
5. Dr Morag Treanor
6. Dr Terry Wrigley

### **Submissions from Individuals**

- Caroline Farquhar
- Maggie Hodge
- Niall McKinnon
- Lorna Walker
- Mrs Carol H Ajundi
- Vijay Kumar
- Shelagh Campbell
- Suzanne Ensom (English Speaking Union) & Nick Bibby
- Simon Needham

### **Anonymous Submissions**

- Parent 1
- Child/ Young Person 1
- Teacher 1
- Teacher 2
- Teacher 3
- Teacher 4
- Teacher 5
- Teacher 6