

Report

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| Report to: | Education Resources Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 8 February 2022 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Education Resources) |

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| Subject: | Equity – School Update |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide an update on the developments in supporting schools to close the poverty-related attainment gap
- ♦ provide an update on the upcoming changes to Scottish Attainment Challenge funding

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress made with the Education Resources Equity Strategy and in supporting schools to close the poverty-related attainment gap, be noted; and
- (2) that the revised policy for allocating Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding from April 2022 be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. It is an established fact that poverty has an impact on school attainment. The most recent figure (2020) indicates that 'just under 13,000 children in South Lanarkshire (23.1%) live in relative poverty once housing costs have been taken into account'. Campaign to End Child Poverty/ End Child Poverty Coalition (ECPC)
- 3.2. In Scotland, the relative poverty **of an area** is measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). SIMD is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD is generally measured on a 1-10 scale, with the most deprived data zones in Scotland being allocated SIMD Decile 1 rating and the least deprived areas in Scotland being allocated and SIMD decile 10 rating.
- 3.3. Free School Meals (FSM) is commonly used as an additional measure to understand individual circumstances of families.

From 1 August 2021, children are eligible for free meals in school if families get:-

- ♦ Universal Credit (where monthly earned income is not more than £625)
- ♦ Income Support
- ♦ income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- ♦ income-based Employment and Support Allowance

- ♦ support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Children are also entitled to free school lunches if families get:-

- ♦ Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and income is less than £16,105
- ♦ both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and have an income of up to £7,500

3.4. The individual circumstances of families may be complex and not always covered by the measures above, for example, the impact of Covid which has led to some families' temporary loss of income.

3.5. In South Lanarkshire Council Schools

- ♦ 21% of learners live in SIMD1 or SIMD 2 areas.
- ♦ 20.6% are FSM Entitled (based on P4-7 pupils only)

3.6. Education Resources is firmly committed to supporting young people overcome any disadvantage which arises as a result of being born into poverty, not just in attainment, but in their everyday lives.

4. Scottish Attainment Challenge

4.1. The Scottish Attainment Challenge is an umbrella term used to describe the full allocation of monies provided to schools to help tackle the poverty related attainment gap. There are two strands to the Scottish Attainment Challenge, one being the Schools' Programme (SAC) and the other being Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

4.2. The Scottish Government started Pupil Equity Funding for all schools in 2017; providing additional funding directly to schools based on the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. For 2021-2022, South Lanarkshire Council schools have been allocated £10.4M in PEF money. This is allocated to 146 out of 148 SLC schools based on Scottish Government criteria and includes a 15% Pupil Premium uplift for this year only, to support recovery post Covid.

4.3. Schools have direct control over their PEF monies and how this is spent. Schools take into account their individual circumstances and context and consult with stakeholders and partners to ensure the monies are spent to secure maximum impact for the children and families in most need. All schools with Pupil Equity Funding submit two Profiles of Spend; one outlines how they intend to spend their allocation and the other outlines how they actually spent their allocation at year-end. Schools also report in more detail how they utilise their PEF via their School Improvement Plan. A mid-year update on progress and impact is given in November/December and a final impact report is outlined in schools' Standards and Quality Reports. These are scrutinised to ensure the money is being spent appropriately and is having sufficient impact for pupils affected by poverty.

4.4. 20 South Lanarkshire Schools are currently supported by funding from the SAC Programme. These schools are situated within some of the most deprived areas of the Council. Up until this point, schools have bid directly to the Scottish Government for a share of SAC Programme funding. In session 2021/22, a total of £1.8M was allocated to these 20 schools. There is a strict and rigorous process to bid for and to report on the use of SAC funding. This is currently led by the Scottish Government.

- 4.5. In the last year the Scottish Government has undertaken a national review of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and, on 23 November, announced a refresh of the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.
- 4.6. The SAC Schools' Programme, in its current form, will cease from April 2022. This represents a change of national policy and was agreed by COSLA in November 2021. A new funding model will be in place from April 2022. Funding from the SAC Schools' Programme, along with funding from Challenge Authorities, will now be more evenly distributed across all local authorities in Scotland. South Lanarkshire Council will receive £1.47M central funding for session 2022/23. This will increase year on year until 2025/26 where the amount of funding will be £2.47M.
- 4.7. It is recognised that this new funding model and national policy will result in our existing 20 SAC schools losing this direct source of funding. These schools will continue to be supported through the new central allocation until June 2022, in order that exit plans can be prepared and implemented.
- 4.8. In terms of this new funding, model work has already begun to consult with stakeholders and plan ahead to how the central funding might be best used. It is likely that the first year will be a year of transition as we balance supporting our current SAC schools with planning some new approaches and interventions. This plan will be ready for April 2022 and will be shared in greater detail at a future Committee meeting.
- 4.9. All schools within South Lanarkshire Council will continue to receive direct funding thorough the allocation of PEF monies. These new allocations will be made available to schools in February 2022.

5. Participatory Budgeting

- 5.1. Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a way for stakeholders to have a direct say in how monies are spent. The Scottish Government and COSLA made a commitment that at least 1% of local government budgets in Scotland will be subject to participatory budgeting by the end of 2021. Each school was asked to commit a minimum of 5% of their PEF allocation to PB. During school session 2020/21, Head Teachers were briefed on the PB process and taken through training, which outlined expectations and timescales, signposted resources and outlined the support that will be given to support them with this activity. Head Teachers identified a staff member to lead/facilitate this activity in their school during session 2021/2022.
- 5.2. Schools undertook a rigorous consultation process with stakeholders led by a Participatory Budgeting Stakeholder Group in each school. Schools then engaged stakeholders in the voting process. A sample PB process for Lanark Grammar School is attached in Appendix 1.
- 5.3. Schools are now progressing with their spend, to ensure the minimum 5% is spent in full by the end of March 2022 in line with PEF guidelines. The Equity Team supports schools to navigate any challenges they face to ensure a full spend before the end of the financial year. Total PB spend amounts to £606,285. A PB update is reported at Area Committee meetings each quarter.

6. Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

- 6.1. Teacher Professional Judgement based on Curriculum for Excellence levels, is gathered nationally each year for P1, P4, P7 and S3 in literacy and numeracy. For the last two academic years (2019/2020 and 2020/2021), this data has not been gathered for S3 due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was not collected in 2019/2020

for P1, P4 and P7 for the same reasons, but was gathered last year in 2020/2021 for these year groups.

- 6.2. There is no definitive way to measure the poverty-related attainment gap. However, for the purpose of tracking and monitoring across schools and the authority, it was decided, after consultation with Head Teachers, that the progress of the group of learners who reside within SIMD 1 and 2 plus any other learners registered for free school meals, will be measured against those learners residing in deciles 3 to 10 who are not eligible for free school meals. For monitoring purposes, teacher judgement levels of children's progress in P1, P4, P7 and S3 in literacy and numeracy are used as benchmarks.
- 6.3. Appendix 2 shows the progress SLC has made with closing the poverty-related attainment gap for literacy and numeracy using the measure outlined in section 6.2. Data shows that the gap in Literacy has closed significantly, however, the gap in numeracy has widened slightly after progress being made in previous years. Plans are in place to further support numeracy across our schools and is the subject of a separate Committee Report.
- 6.4. Appendix 3 shows the combined data across P1/4/7 for South Lanarkshire Council for session 2020/21, adapted from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. This data can also be accessed on the Public Tableau Dashboard.
[School Information Dashboard - Primary | Tableau Public](#)
- 6.5. Numeracy in South Lanarkshire Council during the period 2020/2021, based on Curriculum for Excellence levels for P1/4/7 demonstrates that the aggregated attainment gap between the most and least deprived learners in Numeracy is currently 15.37% points. This is 1.44% points better than the National average and is the 8th best out of 32 Local Authorities in Scotland.
- 6.6. Literacy in South Lanarkshire Council during the period 2020/2021, based on Curriculum for Excellence levels for P1/4/7, demonstrates that the aggregated attainment gap between the most and least deprived learners in Literacy is currently 19.40% points. This is 1.26% points better than the National average and is the 8th best out of 32 Local Authorities in Scotland.

7. Cost of the School Day

- 7.1. The concept of Cost of the School Day (CoSD) comes directly from the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, Every Child Every Chance. This plan aims to deliver the targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.
- 7.2. Cost of the School Day remains a key focus for the Equity Team with the aspiration that the CoSD is reduced in all schools across South Lanarkshire Council and all schools are poverty aware, with a CoSD Policy in place.
- 7.3. Cost of the School Day Training for class teachers, equity leads, and school leaders was delivered to both primary and secondary colleagues in November 2021. Evaluations have been very positive. Highly effective practice from two schools; St John Ogilvie High School and Netherburn Primary School were featured in the new national Child Poverty Action Group (Scotland) Toolkit. These two schools will feature in the Cost of the School Day Good Practice CLPL session which will be delivered in February 2022. Education Resources' Equity Toolkit which will be developed in 2022 will include a dedicated Cost of the School Day section for schools.

- 7.4. As part of their focus on equity in education, the Scottish Government committed to “take steps to remove charges for core curriculum activities”. South Lanarkshire has received a total of £385,000 for the 2021-2022 academic year in order to support schools to achieve this. This means that all schools were given money to ensure that no child should be charged for any aspect of the core curriculum.

8. Additional Support for Schools

- 8.1. In Education Resources and council wide, it is our aim to support children and families to mitigate against poverty with a reach beyond schools’ attainment. Staff in Education Resources have worked with others in the council, and partner agencies to help deliver supports which help families in poverty in the widest sense.

8.2. Challenge Poverty Week 4th – 8th October 2021

- 8.2.1 SLC took part in Poverty Alliance’s Challenge Poverty Week. Schools were encouraged to take part in the week by sharing lessons, materials and ideas through the equity communication channels. Support available across the authority, such as Money Matters and the Community Wellbeing Outreach pilot was also promoted. Schools reported the materials and signposting were useful with many utilising and signposting them in their schools throughout the week.

8.3 Scottish Book Trust – Books for Christmas

- 8.3.1 The Equity Team worked in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust, who donated 2964 books to be distributed to children and young people across SLC affected by poverty. 2964 children and young people from 51 different establishments across SLC were gifted a book to take home before for Christmas. As a result of the success of the initiative, the Scottish Book Trust have gifted SLC additional books, which will be delivered and distributed to children and young people across SLC in January 2022.

8.4 SLC Winter Clothing and Sportswear Campaign 2021

- 8.4.1 With help from local supermarkets throughout South Lanarkshire, over 1100 coats/jackets and sportswear items were collected and redistributed to children and young people who needed them across SLC.

- 8.4.2 Education Resources were allocated £50,000 of Scottish Government funding in December 2021 to assist families with the purchase of winter clothing. The monies were distributed across all schools, based on free-school meal entitlement. Schools report this was very well received by families

8.5. Community Wellbeing Pilot

- 8.5.1 Education Resources are working in partnership with the Community Wellbeing Team to pilot an outreach model, which specifically supports families to access benefits and money advice, drawing on support from specialist services such as the Money Matters Advice Service and Benefits and Revenues Service where required.

- 8.5.2 Promotional material – a short animation, poster and flyer were developed to promote the new service and the video can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQinxeharQI> Referral forms have been developed to allow customers to request support from the Wellbeing Team.

- 8.5.3 A phased approach has been taken to the introduction of the new service. All schools have been briefed and have communicated the service via their individual school communication channels. Appendix 4 outlines the impact of the pilot, as of 15 December 2021.

- 8.5.4 In person school support will be piloted at Calderside Academy from January 2022, where a member of the Community Wellbeing Team will base themselves in the school and work with staff to support families.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1. Schools will continue to be supported in tackling the closing of the poverty related attainment gap through training, direct support and work with the central team. The existing 20 SAC schools will be supported as we make the transition from one funding model to another.
- 9.2. SAC schools will be offered the opportunity to 'have their say' on the impact of their existing plans and how this expertise and knowledge can be best used within their own establishment and across the authority.
- 9.3. A Steering Group will be established to support planning and communication of the new strategy and central plans. The group will include members of both SAC and non-SAC establishments as well as key central staff.
- 9.4. A plan for the new SAC funding model will be written in consultation with stakeholders and in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines, once published.

10. Employee Implications

- 10.1. None.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. All Pupil Equity funding will be allocated directly to schools. Funding allocations will continue to be monitored through the Equity Governance structure already established. This ensures appropriate spend and accountability within Scottish Government timescales.

12. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 12.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained within this report.

13. Other Implications

- 13.1 There are no direct risks associated with this report which is provided for information only.

14. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 14.1 There is no requirement to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment or to consult on the contents of this report.
- 14.2. Consultation will take place with our Head Teachers and our Professional Associations.

Tony McDaid

Executive Director (Education Resources)

13 January 2022

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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Participatory Budgeting in Clydesdale



LANARK GRAMMAR SCHOOL

An overview of the Participatory Budgeting process in our school



Water Fountains and Reusable Bottles



Rationale

When talking to our pupils about the cost of the school day, access to free drinking water came up early on. Pupils felt that if you didn't have a water bottle, you would have to buy water from the canteen for 70p. Over the week this would build up. Those who bring a bottle from home are also only able to fill up their bottle in the street area.



Outcomes

All pupils will have access to top up drinking water bottles throughout the school day, removing the need to purchase bottled water. Pupils who need a reusable water bottle can also collect one, removing this cost and supporting our school's sustainability agenda. As any pupil can use the school reusable water bottles, there will be no stigma or identification of the PEF pupils for whom this will have the biggest impact.

Measures

Reduced spend on bottled water.
Increased observation of pupils using reusable water bottles throughout the school day.
Positive feedback from pupils and parents on the removal of the financial cost of buying water throughout the school day.

Description of the process

- Step 1** – Collected ideas from pupil focus groups
- Step 2** – Gathered suggestions from parents via email
- Step 3** – Phone conversations with parents to develop ideas
- Step 4** – Link with Rigsby Primary School: DHT attended and spoke with parents at school drop off / pick up times along with the lead teacher from Rigsby.
- Step 5** – Pupil focus group finalised the options and prepared the vote via google form



Lanark Grammar School
@LGS_1183

Pupils met today to have more discussion about how to use over £9500 to improve opportunities in our school community. Our young people are doing us proud and impressed Miss Lindsay and Mr Sherry 🍷🍷. Thank you and well done! 🙌
[#participatorybudget](#) [#equity](#)

Quote from a pupil –

“It's good to be asked about something that makes a difference in your own school.”

Voting Process



Pupils made a PowerPoint letting everyone know the pros and cons of each idea and this went out on social media and through email along with a Google Form to let people have their say.



Lanark Grammar School
@LGS_1183

It's now time for the parents, pupils and staff of LGS to vote on how we spend over £9,500 of our budget.

An email is on its way to parents with some more details about the 5 options.

Vote by following the link below by 6th of October.

Vote Counting and Announcement

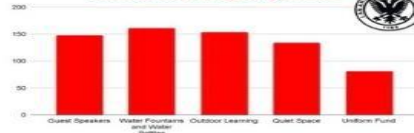
When the votes were in, the results were shared on Twitter and by email.



Lanark Grammar School
@LGS_1183

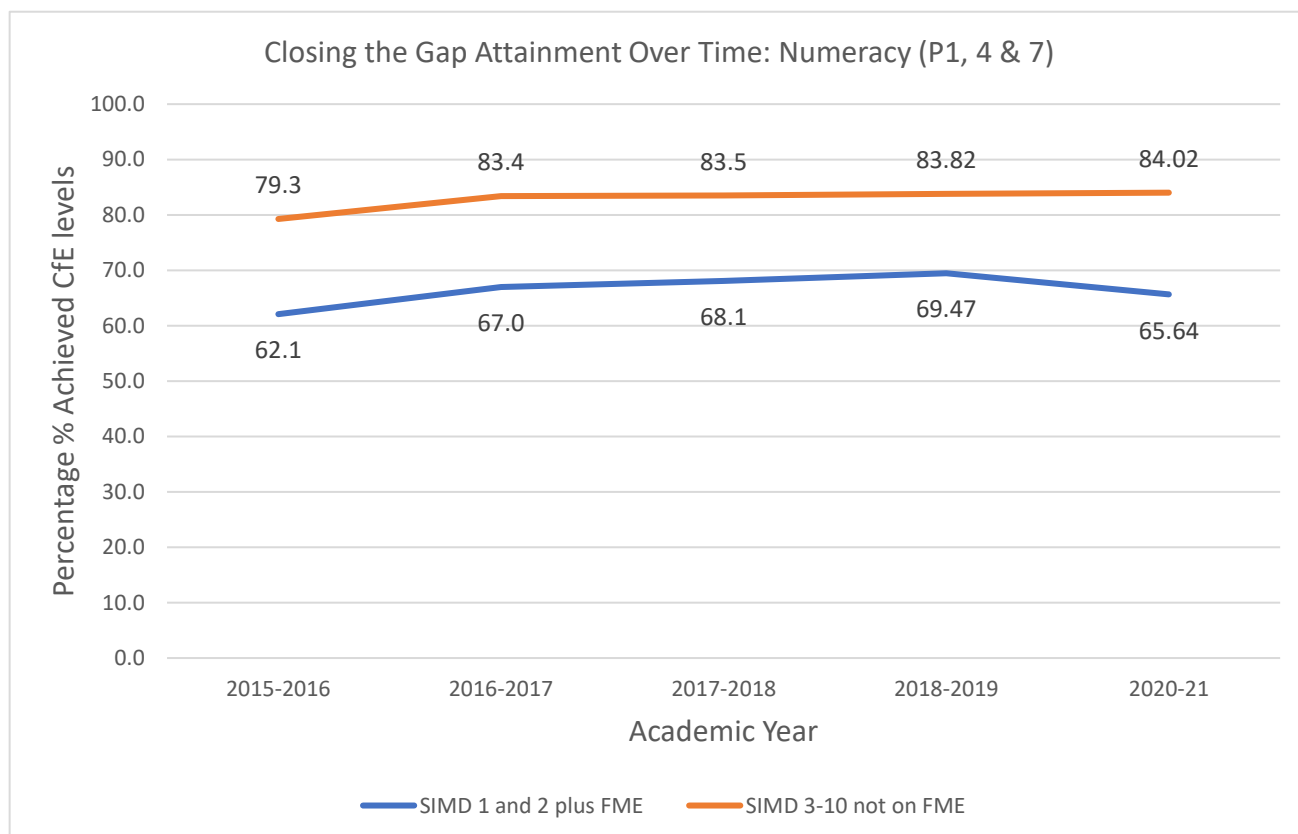
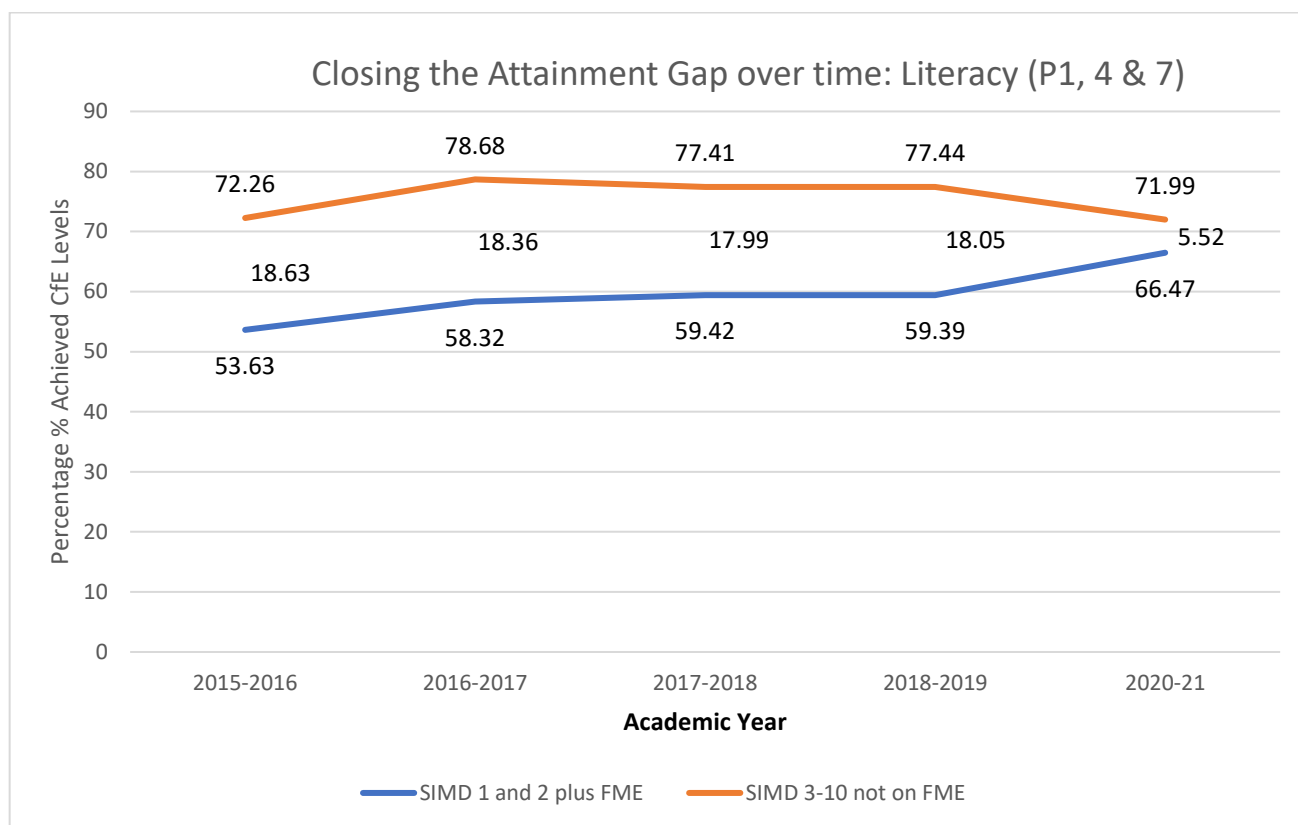
📢 Participatory Budgeting Announcement
The results are in!!! Thank you to everyone who voted. We have £9,500 and will take forward as many of the ideas as possible to give as many young people as many opportunities as we can. [#schoolcommunity](#) [#participatorybudgeting](#) [@SLCEquity](#)

Participatory Budgeting Results



Impact

Appendix 2 SLC Poverty-related Attainment Gap Graphs (using SIMD 1 and 2 plus FSM v SIMD 3-10 with no FSM)



Appendix 3 Local Government Benchmarking Framework

Fig 9: Literacy Attainment Gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils (P1,4,7 Combined)

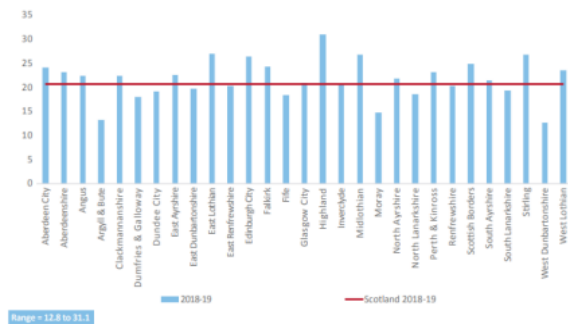
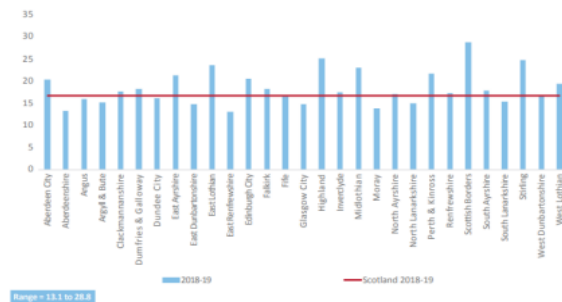


Fig 10: Numeracy Attainment Gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils (P1,4,7 Combined)



Source: Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Scottish Government

Appendix 4 Community Wellbeing Pilot Impact

Recorded impact of the pilot, as of the 15th of December 2021:

| Type of Contact | Total | Comment |
|---|-------|---|
| Family Incoming Calls | 72 | Total 170 contacts - 136 (80%) since 8/11/21 - response to pupil post letters. Most popular contact type - online self-referral (55%) |
| Family Self-Referral | 94 | |
| Family Other Referrals (email etc) | 4 | |
| Education Incoming Calls | 25 | Total 59 contacts with 16 (26%) of all referrals from one primary school. Volumes still low given the feedback about families needing help. It should be noted that some family self-referrals note source as 'teacher' |
| Education 3 rd Party Referral Form | 33 | |
| Education Other (email etc) | 1 | |
| Appointments Made | 46 | From 233 contacts 46 appointments made (crisis managed and then follow up triage) with 6 (crisis & triage) completed at 1st contact. |
| Appointments Completed | 51 | |
| Service Requests | 460 | All enquiries undertaken including signposting, enquiry resolution etc |

- Total number of 'Families in Crisis (no money, no food or fuel)' who have been helped by the CWO Pilot = 72
- Families who have been referred to the Money Matters Advice Service benefits advice = 86
- Families who have been referred to the Money Matters Advice Service money advice = 27
- Families who have been referred to Home Energy Scotland = 61
- Families who have been referred to Housing = 5
- Families who have been referred to Social Work = 13
- Families who have been referred to SLC Leisure and Culture = 5
- Families who have been referred to SPT (Travel) = 10 card/disability)
- Families who have been referred to Scottish Welfare Fund = 42
- Families who have been referred to Benefits and Revenues = 53
- Families who have been referred to other services including repeat contact = 170
- Total amount of families who have had assistance = 473

- Total Debt Managed = £34,767.92

- Total Financial Gain = £10,273.99*

* Only includes monetary value with CWO action e.g. DHP, HES, CG, CCG, Food pack/warm clothing value. Excludes any benefits pending award with MMAS assistance