THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE

# REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019-20

PHASE 3

CONTENTS

The Northern Alliance is a Regional Improvement Collaborative between eight local authorities, across the North and West of Scotland: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands, with a shared vision to improve the educational and life chances of our children and young people.

Unique to the Northern Alliance is its rurality, covering 58.4% of the landmass of Scotland yet representing a small percentage of the Scottish population. The geography and common challenges experienced across the region moved the collaborative to identify new ways of working and adopt a shared approach to the communities it represents in the North and West of Scotland and the islands.

The Northern Alliance continues to develop its culture of collaboration, sharing expertise and creating local and regional networks. Equity in educational outcomes with focus on the poverty related attainment continues to feature centrally in the work of the collaborative, and the four key priorities align with those of the National Improvement Framework.

- Priority 1: Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
- Priority 2: Closing the poverty related attainment gap between most and least disadvantaged children
- Priority 3: Improving the structure which help children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Priority 4: Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

As a group of eight local authorities, the Northern Alliance remains committed to improving outcomes and closing the gap which exists across our wide and varied communities and crucially, championing a child and family-centred approach to address achievement and to drive improvement.
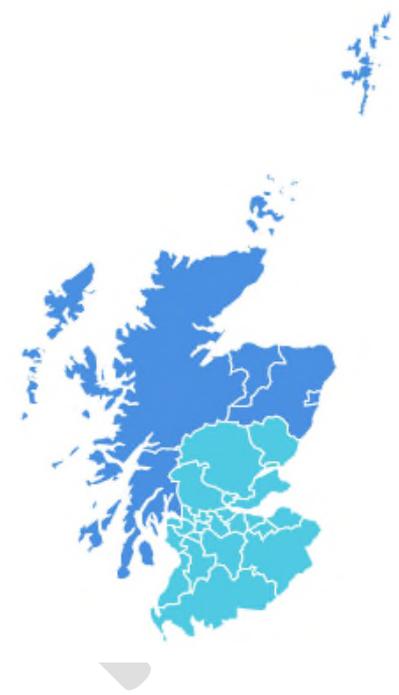
Over the last year the Northern Alliance has continued to progress the plan of collaborative improvement activities. Progress has been made across the workstreams as detailed below.

Workstream	Progress to Date
Early Years	- Development of **ELC Project Assurance Toolkit** to frame discussions with local authority teams regarding progress towards the delivery of the ELC expansion. This toolkit will also support local authorities in their ongoing evaluation of progress towards August 2020. **Visits to six Northern Alliance authorities** to discuss progress, risk, issues and next steps using the toolkit with individual reports prepared for each local authority **highlighting progress** against each of the eight criteria within the toolkit and agreed next steps. - Focus will now move towards the **quality of ELC provision** across the Northern Alliance ELC settings. - Subscription to Vscene has enabled monthly meetings of the Early Years workstream to be held virtually to facilitate more **effective collaboration and use of time.**
Emerging Literacy	- Launch of **Emerging Literacy in Early Learning and Childcare Online Professional Learning Toolkit**. A toolkit designed to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings through self-facilitated professional learning in taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy. [Whole-School Literacy, Language and Communication Toolkit](#) launched. **Emerging Literacy Senior Management Team and Allied Health Professionals Sessions** in a whole-school approach have been delivered across six of the local authorities, updating school SMT with the whole-school resource hub being created and to support strategic and operational improvement planning using HGIOS4 Emerging Literacy audit tool and the ADKAR model of change. Workstream Engagement: - Aberdeen City – 31/47 (66%) (Early Level) and 32/47 (Whole-School) - Aberdeenshire – 55/100 (55%) - Argyll & Bute – 9/22 (41%) - Moray – 24/37 (65%) - Shetland – 9/25 (36%) - Western Isles – 15/22 (68%) **Emerging Literacy Buddy Network Sessions** delivered in 81 different locations across the Northern Alliance in small groups, facilitated by an online professional learning module developed by the workstream lead. - Online platform through Glow developed with Education Scotland to support the collation of **Foundational Literacy Skills Data**. **The pilot platform will be investigated further with the aim of extending its applications across other workstream innovations.** - Facilitated by the Scottish Government's Allied Health Professional Lead (Children and Young People), Pauling Beirnie, **Planning for Sustainability Sessions** delivered across all eight authorities and health board level to support planning next steps for the Emerging Literacy workstream and sustaining a whole-school approach.
Equalities	**Data has been collected from a variety of settings across the Northern Alliance.** This information will be collated to demonstrate the proportion of settings with specific equality & diversity policies, as well as key working groups within those settings who can be engaged collaboratively. **From the**

	data collection exercise, analysis revealed ~ 50% of settings identifying that they had a setting specific equality and diversity policy. In addition, at least 14 individual equalities working groups exists across schools within the Northern Alliance, with the likelihood of more. • The Equalities Group within Nairn Academy (Highland) has agreed to contribute to a **revised Equalities Charter and Policy**, which will maximise pupil voice. • **An agreement has been reached between *Stonewall*,** who can offer a reduced rate for Local Authorities within the Northern Alliance to complete their benchmarking exercise. This will recognise their contributions to being an inclusive employer.
Community, Learning and Development	• **Leadership Pack** completed and circulated. Designed in collaboration with Professor McArdle of Aberdeen University for use across the Northern Alliance. • **Family Learning pack** distributed across all 8 authorities. • **Digital skills in CLD** strengthened through 6 sessions run by the CLD Standards Council on their refreshed online learning platform for CLD practitioners – over 60 participants. • Successful **event in Sweden** involving young people from across the North Sea boundaries region. • **Briefing sessions** under way bringing multi-agency groupings together to create common understandings of **Family Learning** and to plan for next steps delivery as relevant to setting. • Dialogue continuing around **development of common outcome language**. Meeting hosted by High Life Highland and Education Scotland to explore performance information gathering and sharing. Attendance from other NA authority CLD staff. An invitation to attend a similar event in Dundee is being taken up. • **Collaboration between Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and the Aberdeen Science Centre** resulting in a funding award from Education Scotland (**one of only 3 CLD focussed projects in Scotland**) to Unlock STEM in CLD Practice. To date over 60 staff have taken part in a co-designed programme and impact is being seen in practice on the ground.
IT-Transformation (e-Learning)	• **e-Learning initiatives across the Northern Alliance** are attracting attention from throughout Scotland and educationalists from places such as Japan, Australia, America, Wales, Ireland and the Channel Isles. • **Suite of 'e-Sgoil in a Nutshell' guides** are now available for pupils, parents, teachers and classroom facilitators. • Current contract for **Subject Delivery of 28 certificated subjects** across seven local authorities with increased demand anticipated. • **Facilitation of music lessons** on a range of instruments. • Development of an **Interrupted Learner Pilot Project** of English and Maths Nat 4/5 involving engagement with key professionals who are involved in supporting children and young people with additional support needs, with the aim of gathering a qualitative data set which will inform next steps to promote accessibility and maximise efficiency of the development. • **Increased staff interest in online delivery** in both the Primary and Secondary sectors with full sessions or short to medium term emergency cover provided in a number of subjects across local authorities. • **Pilot projects with partner agencies** providing opportunities to bring non-teacher expertise into classrooms equitably and affordably, irrespective of geographical location. • Successful **pilot projects encouraging school involvement** in pupil led learning with very positive feedback from both Primary and Secondary schools.
1+2 Modern Languages	• Online training/CLPL being developed in local authorities responding to identified need. • Improved engagement with languages shown in 1+2 Government Survey responses authority wide with increased Primary engagement with both L2

	and L3. **The number of entries in National 2 and 3 increased from 16 in 2017 to 39 in 2018. A slight increase was observed in National 5, from 1900 to 1953.** • Tailored local authority strategies under development. • Language and Gaelic online resources under development.
Leadership	• Three meetings held with representation from all eight local authorities. • **Focus on developing a strategic approach to leadership development**, i.e. not focussing on styles of or approaches to leadership. • Leadership frameworks from different local authorities shared and discussed. **Agreed that all local authorities should have such a framework** suitable for their context. • Development strategy paper produced which is informing Phase 3 of the Regional Improvement Plan. • **Agreed aspiration emerged:** *"all schools or groups of schools are able to articulate their approach to leadership development at all levels."*
Numeracy	• A **data driven approach** is currently being taken to identify needs. The data will be sourced from a practitioner survey and the P1, P4 and P7 Scottish National Standardised Assessments. **40 responses to the practitioner survey and data on approx.3000 children and young people and their performance on the numeracy SNSAs.** • Ongoing development of **Online Diagnostic Assessment Training**.
Poverty/Closing the Gap	• A **suite of workshops** is under development as an offer of support to local authorities to remove barriers to learning created by poverty. • **Project Worker** appointed as part of Moray Foodbank Plus to develop existing project work. • A detailed analysis of the Scottish Household Survey is due to take place. This will aim to replicate the work done in Shetland and examine the prevalence of poverty in light of the minimum income standard for rural areas.
Secondary Maths	• **Communication** with maths teachers across the NA. • **Positive engagement** of and with Education Scotland. • Emergent engagement of practitioners with Professional Learning Resource. • **National 5 Improvement Conference** organised to share best practice, the national standard, learner pathways, digital technologies and research-based pedagogies.
Sustaining Education	• **Learning Estates Strategy** and **Toolkit** development. • **Learning Estates Audit** across the Northern Alliance and report of recommendations complete. • **Local authority visits** to evaluate capacity of schools. • **Suitability Assessments and Training** and a **Learning Estate Strategy Workshop** facilitated, raising awareness of the importance of a strategy, key drivers and consistency.
Systems and Quality Improvement	• Existing collaborative **self-evaluation practice and processes and school improvement partnership programmes** identified and discussed with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. • Partnership created with Aberdeenshire Council to support the development of a collaborative approach to **Validated Self-Evaluation** with a view to sharing this practice with other LAs.

	• Future development of a **Shetland approach to collaborative approaches to self-evaluation** based on existing practice elsewhere within the Northern Alliance. • Use of **National Inspection data** to identify areas of strengths and for improvement across NA – ongoing. • In collaboration with Aberdeen University, the Northern Alliance has created a **Learning Hub** to provide and promote opportunities for collaboration on the four workstreams. Learning informally and formally, digitally or face-to-face, the Hub will provide opportunities to shape, enhance and transform learning.

For more data examining the progress & performance of the Northern Alliance, please click on this icon:

Progress-and-Perfor
mance-Report-2.html

DIFFERENCES WE HOPE TO SEE

INDICATORS	2017-2018 BASELINE			2018-2019 VALUE	2019-2020 VALUE	2020-2021 VALUE	2021-2022 TARGET
% of P1 Pupils achieving early level literacy (based on reading, writing, talking & listening)	R 77.7	W 74.6	T&L 84.2				
% of P1 Pupils achieving early level numeracy		80.4					
% of P4 Pupils achieving first level literacy (based on reading, writing, talking & listening)	R 75.7	W 69.9	T&L 82.3				
% of P4 Pupils achieving first level numeracy		74.4					
% of P7 Pupils achieving second level literacy (based on reading, writing, talking & listening)	R 77.10	W 74.6	T&L 82.0				
% of P7 Pupils achieving second level numeracy		73.6					
% of S3 Pupils achieving Level 3 or better literacy (based on reading, writing, talking & listening)	R 88.4	W 87.1	T&L 89.5				
% of S3 Pupils achieving Level 3 or better numeracy		88.7					
% of S4 Pupils achieving Level 4 literacy (based on reading, writing, talking & listening)	R 52.7	W 49.6	T&L 53.3				
% of S3 Pupils achieving Level 4 numeracy		55.5					
% of School Leavers entering an initial positive destination		95.8					
% of Leavers 1+ SCQF at Level 5		87.1					
% of Leavers 1+ SCQF Level 6		60.8					
% of Leavers Attaining Literacy by SCQF Level	4 93.6	5 81.7	6 53.7				

% of Leavers Attaining Numeracy by SCQF Level	4 91.2	5 68.4	6 30.0				
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for leadership of change	G 30.3	VG 6..06	E 0				
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for learning, teaching and assessment	G 25.8	VG 4.5	E 0				
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for raising attainment & achievement	G 25.6	VG 7.0	E 0				
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion	G 39.4	VG 12.1	E 0				
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for securing children's progress	G 31.3	VG 3.1	E 0				
% of establishments evaluated as good or better for self-evaluation for self-improvement	G 25.0	VG 50.0	E 0				

KEY THEMES, NIF PRIORITIES AND WORKSTREAMS

The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan was previously developed with 13 workstreams aiming to work collaboratively across the region. On reflection of the past year, and following feedback from Officers, Head Teachers and Teachers, a streamlined approach will help focus activity. There are a number of key themes throughout the existing workstreams which aligned through the National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities, have formed four new Workstreams.

KEY THEMES FOR COLLABORATION			
Attainment Gap	Empowerment	Excellence & Equity	Improvement
Digital	Leadership	Parental Engagement	Place
NIF PRIORITIES			
1. Improvement in attainment, literacy and numeracy	2. Closing the poverty related attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children	3. Improving the structures which help children and young people's health and wellbeing	4. Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people
WORKSTREAMS			
CURRICULUM	**RAISING ATTAINMENT AND CLOSING THE POVERTY GAP**	**SUSTAINING EDUCATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES**	**LEADERSHIP**
- Develop curriculum-specific supports and CLPL for key curricular areas; - Develop specific supports for Head Teachers in developing their curriculum rationales for the BGE and Senior Phase; - Develop and share practice in relation to the development of skills for learning, life and work, linked to DYW; - Develop digital approaches to curriculum delivery.	- Practitioners and young people will have an understanding of poverty within their context and place. - Agree measurement tools for rural poverty in collaboration with communities. - Educational establishments will plan interventions for children, young people and families using the appropriate measurement tool(s) where appropriate. - To close the attainment gap more effectively, including the use of Attainment Scotland Funding.	- Develop a Learning Estates Strategy for the whole RIC area; - Develop a toolkit for use by individual authorities; - Exploring framework to facilitate change in our communities; - Develop the e-learning model across the Northern Alliance, widening access to curriculum; - Improve the digital CLPL offer for staff; - Improve environments for learning across the Northern Alliance.	- Develop leadership at all levels; - Develop RIC wide leadership development programmes for classroom, middle, senior and system leaders; - Develop and share succession planning approaches across the RIC; - Champion school empowerment and self-improving schools approaches across the RIC.

WORKSTREAM 1 – CURRICULUM

	IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	HOW WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS	LINK TO NIF PRIORITY
WORKSTREAM 1	Improve access to professional learning by establishing a digital approach which utilises strength from across the system;	• Development of refresher training package for Glow leads with accompanying easy to use guide • Develop/agree a simple and clear digital portal which is accessible to all staff across the Northern Alliance. Portal must: - Be easily accessible - Allow the posting of short films - Encourage digital collaboration - Allow clear links with already published information - Show links with GTCS Standards. • Use of the portal to be closely monitored to support improvement and should enable a 'sign up for alerts' and 'feedback' feature to increase reach and impact.	• Number of colleagues accessing the portal. • Increase in the number of colleagues accessing professional learning through the Northern Alliance.	All
	Improve the development of a bespoke curriculum rationale based on local need by sharing best practice;	• Each Local Authority to identify best practice to enable the development of several short films exploring how a rationale was developed, what that looks like in practice and what the impact on children has been. • Publish films on digital portal alongside national and local guidance • Provide a Q&A those featured in films with opportunities for on-going dialogue and support. • Evaluate effectiveness of approach with a sample of Q&A participants and plan next steps.	• Number of colleagues accessing resources. • Number of colleagues engaging with Q&A. • Improvement in self-evaluation of QI 2.1. • Inspection findings. • Improvement in 5 key measures.	All

WORKSTREAM 1	Improve learning, teaching and assessment practice across all curricular areas (with key curriculum areas to be determined following Insight release);	• Collate tools from across the Northern Alliance which support self-improvement and self-evaluation of excellent learning and teaching and make available digitally.
		• Audit current vulnerabilities in Learning, Teaching and Assessment to help develop a series of multi-media workshops which explore pedagogy. Workshops to be utilised at setting/local authority level.
		• Collate Local Authority examples of effective differentiation and develop multi-media programme of three professional learning sessions to be used at school/Local Authority level.
		• Establish digital subject/stage collaboration with a focus on sharing best practice and addressing areas of vulnerability including planning and moderation of a level. Approach to provide opportunities to link with other school across the Alliance and further digital or face to face collaboration. Groups likely to comprise:
		  - Early years
		  - Early stages (primary)
		  - Middle stages (primary)
		  - Upper stages (primary)
		  - Secondary subjects
		• Identify best moderation practice and use of triangulated evidence and exemplify digitally.
			• Improvement in core QIs.
			• Improvement in moderation across the BGE (value added and professional judgement more aligned).
			• Level of engagement with professional learning.
				All

	Improve the development of skills for learning, life and work by sharing best practice and supporting areas of common weakness	• Work with SDS to audit current practice in planning for skills development and share best practice digitally and through a series of 'Talking Heads'. • Consideration of the development of an exemplar skills framework for the Northern Alliance. • Establish a focus group to work with SDS to identify skills gaps and agree appropriate means of addressing them. • Exploration of how best to support the provision of appropriate Learning pathways and skills development for vulnerable learners.	• Improvement in positive and sustained destinations.	Priority 4

WORKSTREAM 2 – RAISING ATTAINMENT AND CLOSING THE GAP

	IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	HOW WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS	LINK TO NIF PRIORITY
WORKSTREAM 2	Create a Northern Alliance workshop on understanding poverty within context and place. Northern Alliance workshop to be delivered in all educational establishments. Empower managers and Head Teachers to use this Career Long Professional Learning with all staff. Creating activity to support schools gather the pupil voice relating to poverty. Highlight how poverty can be taught within the curriculum to increase pupil awareness.	• Lead Officers to create workshop based on information from NHS, Local Child Poverty Action Reports and Education Scotland. • Lead Officers to liaise with Local Authorities as to how this will be delivered. E.g. HT Conference, Area Days etc. Present Workshop. • Creation of Support Pack for schools. • Adapt and Share Argyll & Bute's model for gathering pupil voice to support improvement in schools. • Identify and share events relating to poverty to all schools within local authorities. e.g. EIS PACT programme, Challenge Poverty Week	• Workshop created and shared with all 8 Local Authorities within the Northern Alliance. • Agreed set of dates. • Workshop delivered to almost all HTs across Northern Alliance by June 2020. • Measurement on the uptake of schools. • Percentage of Schools will have used materials to gather information on poverty from children.	Priority 2

WORKSTREAM 2	Liaise with others to explore characteristics which have specific impact on rural poverty.	• Work with research assistant to gather relevant data from local authorities. Liaise with Borders Council to discuss the process of how Borders Child Poverty Index was created. • Work with researchers to ensure current research impacts on our work including the work from Shetland and across the Northern Alliance. • Meet with Higher Education Establishments to discuss viability of creating measurement tool.		Priority 2
	Collaborating with the third sector and partnership agencies to inform the measurement tool.		• Measurement Tool is created.	
	Educational establishments will apply the cost of the school day toolkit to their setting.	• The cost of the school day toolkit will be disseminated to all educational establishments. • Northern Alliance Lead Officers will support schools in tackling the cost of the school day with Child Poverty Action Group Project Officers based in Moray.	• Almost all schools will be aware of the Cost of the School Day Toolkit. • Most of our schools will have used toolkit and made changes within to school to barriers that poverty creates.	Priority 2
	Each educational establishment will know their gap and plan interventions to close it.	• Lead Officers to support Local Authorities to identify their gap by building a network of QIOs to look at data and tracking and monitoring processes.		Priority 2
	Gather case studies of how Pupil Equity Funding has been implemented effectively across the Northern Alliance.	• School Visits & Interpretation of school level data. • Create directory of opportunities to work with partners and third sectors.	• Increase in HT confidence in using PEF effectively to remove barriers to learning.	

WORKSTREAM 3 – SUSTAINING EDUCATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES

	IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	HOW WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS	LINK TO NIF PRIORITY
WORKSTREAM 3	Develop a Learning Estates Strategy alongside teachers, young people and partners to secure delivery of sustainable education across the Northern Alliance.	• Work with Elected Members – engagement across the Northern Alliance. • Collate and share case studies of successful approaches to increasing sustainability of education. • Build on Young People's Voice 'Imagine If' approach – Parental Engagement. • Develop a framework to facilitate change within local authorities. • Provide support to identify changing pedagogy to support sustaining learning environments. • Analysis of rural school inspection evidence to identify common challenges or issues in relation to sustaining education.	• Learning Estates Strategy in place by September 2020. • CLPL offer on pedagogy for new environments.	ALL

| WORKSTREAM 3 | Increase the delivery of e-learning across the Northern Alliance to maximise opportunities for greater choice and equity for all young people. | Emphasising choice and equity across the Northern Alliance using modern medium. Promotion of e-learning data gathering to promote positives of e-learning. Review staff deployment across the Northern Alliance and identify any surplus staff who could work and deliver via e-learning. Develop 'flip' learning across subjects. Fund secondary head to come together to build e-learning strategy. Support timetabling guidance to maximise choice. Build a pack to support Headteachers to engage with parents on e-learning. Promote small Group Digital Learning – spaces for teacher to teach a number of small groups. | Closer timetabling Continuing increase in e-learning More efficient delivery and more effective use of staff In in numbers of young people achieving their learner pathways Aligned IT approaches for teachers across the Northern Alliance Long-term Impact: - Headteachers have the expectation that e-learning can deliver the needs of young people

   - Increased confidence of staff re digital skills. | Priorities 1, 2, 4 |

WORKSTREAM 4 – LEADERSHIP

	IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	HOW WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS	LINK TO NIF PRIORITY
WORKSTREAM 4	Create a leadership database illustrating leadership pathways and signpost teachers to professional learning activities at all stages of the leadership journey	• Identify leadership development opportunities locally and nationally. • Liaise with schools to identify teachers participating in leadership development activities, courses an programmes and provide updates enabling the Northern Alliance to track progress and destinations.	• Establish baseline for leadership development. • Bi-annual professional learning/leadership bulletin prepared and distributed across Northern Alliance Authorities.	ALL
	Northern Alliance Leadership Accreditation/Award	• Group will explore how this is delivered.	• Completion rates of high-level leadership activities; such as Into Headship, Middle Leadership programmes.	ALL
	Revisit /confirm commitment to "Leadership Development at All Levels"	• Update report. • Education Scotland evaluations.	• Increase in establishments evaluated as good or better for leadership of change.	ALL
	Development of coaching programmes	• Workstream will involve Education Scotland in delivery of coaching programmes.	• Numbers of staff involved in coaching programmes, both delivering and receiving.	ALL
	Northern Alliance Learning Hub at Aberdeen University becoming Centre of Excellence for Leadership	• Colleagues in Ed Scot will work with group and Aberdeen University to establish principles	• Numbers of interactions with resource.	ALL

GOVERNANCE

The governance of the Northern Alliance is designed to ensure a focus on collaborative professionalism at all levels with improving outcomes within an empowered system at the heart of our work.

REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT FORUM

The REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT FORUM is comprised of senior education officers from the eight local authorities, the Regional Improvement Lead and Project Officer as well as the Senior Regional Advisor from Education Scotland.

The REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT FORUM develops the Improvement Plan, agrees priorities and workstreams, scrutinises performance and allocates appropriate resources in order to drive improvement across the Regional Improvement Collaborative.

WORKSTREAM LEADS

The WORKSTREAM LEADS report monthly to the REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT FORUM with progress updates. The process of monthly reporting ensures activity remains focused and continues to contribute to the successful delivery of the vision of the REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE.

Each workstream has a steering group, made up of participants from each local authority, and Education Scotland, to focus on delivery of the work stream. The Regional Improvement Lead has oversight of each of the four steering groups and workstream leads to ensure consistency of approach across the work streams.

REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY FORUM

The REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY FORUM is comprised of representation from senior education officers, local authority Education Conveners/Chairs, Head Teachers, Educational Psychology, Children's Services, Higher Education, LNCT and Public Health, and includes links from Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Government.

The role of the REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY FORUM is to scrutinise, support and challenge the work, progress and priorities of the Northern Alliance, the Improvement Plan and strategy. Acting as a 'critical friend' the Advisory Forum will review the reporting performance and associated activities of the Regional Improvement Plan.

CONVENTION OF CONVENERS

The CONVENTION OF CONVENORS is comprised of Education Convenors/Vice Convenors, Chairs/Vice Chairs and senior officers from the eight local authorities.

The role and purpose of the group is to discuss, scrutinise and advise on the strategy of the Northern Alliance to ensure key objectives are met and to ensure each local authority has a strong voice in the work of the Regional Collaborative at a political and senior officer level.

REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE LEAD

PROJECT OFFICER

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

COMMUNICATONS SUPPORT

FINANCE SUPPORT

CURRICULUM

RAISING ATTAINMENT AND CLOSING THE GAP

SUSTAINING EDUCATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES

LEADERSHIP

NORTHERN ALLIANCE REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: PHASE 3

PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY

1. **The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan will be focussing on 4 thematic areas of improvement:**
   1. Curriculum
   2. Raising Attainment and Closing the Poverty Gap
   3. Sustaining Education in Our Communities
   4. Leadership.

   What area of professional learning would you like to be offered through support from the Northern Alliance?

Empowering leadership	Developing the curriculum	Using data for analysis and improvement
Aspects of numeracy	Aspects of literacy	Leading change
Learning and Teaching aspects of pedagogy	Assessment & Moderation	Identifying key indicators of poverty
e-Learning	Parental Engagement	Other

Empowering leadership	29
Developing the curriculum	67
Using data for analysis and im...	25
Aspects of numeracy	48
Aspects of literacy	41
Leading change	18
Learning and Teaching aspect...	37
Assessment & Moderation	58
Identifying key indicators of p...	11
e-Learning	22
Parental Engagement	36
Other	2
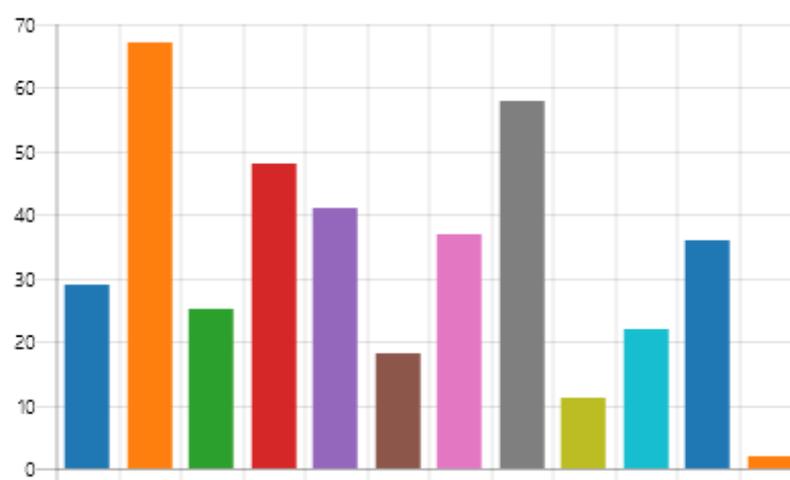
'Other Responses:

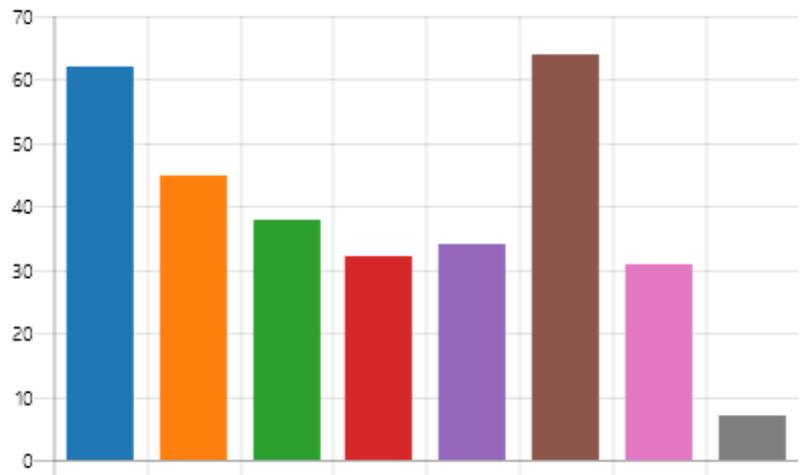*"Nature and place-based education."*   *"Workload and HWB staff."*

2. Which curriculum area(s) do you think would benefit from regional collaboration?

Health & Wellbeing	Languages	Technologies
Expressive Arts	Sciences	Numeracy & Mathematics
Social Studies	Other	

● Health & Wellbeing	62
● Languages	45
● Technologies	38
● Expressive Arts	32
● Sciences	34
● Numeracy & Mathematics	64
● Social Studies	31
● Other	7

'Other' Responses:

ALL of them!	*PEF*	*Literacy & English*
Music Instruction Services	*RME*	*Literacy*

"I think it would be helpful for all subject specialists to have opportunities to work with colleagues from elsewhere, as this has been limited to Lit and Num so far."

3. What would you want your school to gain from being part of our Regional Improvement Collaborative?

Learn from other schools' good practice	Close the poverty related attainment gap
Gain a different perspective on our work	Moderate CfE on a wider scale
Leadership opportunities beyond LA	Improve performance through working together on shared strategies
Work on self-evaluation	Other

Learn from other schools' goo...	86
Close the poverty related attai...	42
Gain a different perspective o...	38
Moderate CfE on a wider scale	52
Leadership opportunities bey...	21
Improve performance through...	57
Work on self evaluation	21
Other	2
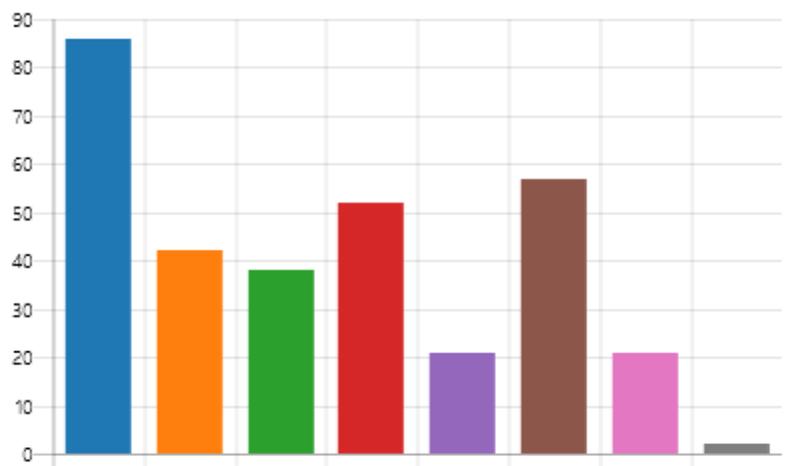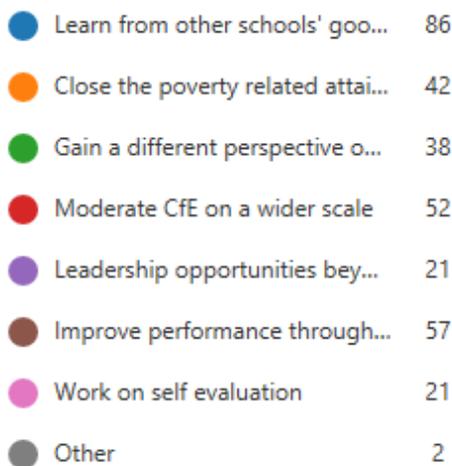
'Other' Responses:

> "And then I would hope all of other things listed (particularly the attainment gap) would be improved as a result of these things."
>
> "All of the above!"

4. Please tell us what support you would need to use Glow as a sharing platform for information and learning.

1	None
2	Improved search facility
3	Taking over as HT in 2018, I have created a staff glow site which we have been slowly transferring relevant info across to. As staff use this they will become more confident. However, I would like them to have access to glow training to use with the children and enhancing learning and teaching.
4	Once a term twilight would be very useful.
5	i don't use GLOW
6	Refresh training in school provided to staff but this is really HT responsibility and not that of the NA.
7	Training
8	More access to all that Google Classroom can offer
9	Training on using it for the basics - this is still very inconsistent. Ensuring it can be used for VC and e-training - ie. making sure the internet is good enough to allow for this.
10	Further training
11	n/a
12	Needs to be streamlined - it's getting too big with too many add-ons
13	Easier navigation through the website
14	Moderation and consistency of resources.
15	None
16	Time - when teaching on minimum time and trying to deliver best lessons and support for pupils there is no time built in for developing/practicing other skills
17	Glow as a sharing platform needs to a worthwhile resource in order for teachers to use valuable time going on there. Support that doesn't overwhelm already very busy professionals.
18	How to setup a pupil share group
19	Better, reliable and consistent connectivity Training to make the most of GLOW
20	Training to all staff on how it has changed.
21	Easy to navigate around Glow
22	None
23	Better sharing of where to go in to Glow to find the things that are meant to be on there - I can't find half the things I'm told will be put on it...!
24	no support personally although our local authority does not really promote the use of glow
25	Further opportunity to find out how best to navigate and utilise the platform - awareness of what is available and how to use it.
26	A face-to-face training session followed up by regular requirement to use it, but the danger is that this would become demanding.

27	Clarity on approach, eg Glow Groups or Teams?
28	Consistent and effective access to it.
29	Refresher training and step by step guide to the new platform to ensure support for staff to sustain usage.
30	How to improve pupil participation in Glow?
31	Just need more practise in-house.
32	Additional training on Glow and consistency across the ASG in regards to relevant resources and priorities within the area.
33	How do you join Yammer groups on Glow? Finding shared resources from other schools.
34	More Training More consistent use Improved IT resources, equipment and connections
35	Strategic managers plan to use this in a more integrated manner.
36	NA
37	CPD training on the wider possibilities of using GLOW in schools
38	Step by step
39	Extensive training- no idea how to use it
40	none
41	Refresher
42	Not required.
43	N/A - Familiar with glow
44	We are becoming more familiar with Glow and more able to use it confidently so we would be able to share more information.
45	Sharing good practice and resources.
46	Additional training.
47	More training
48	None
49	clearer input on how to use GLOW and what information can be put on GLOW.
50	Refresher course
51	Easier to navigate and more user-friendly.
52	Navigation of this resources can be very challenging
53	We have a specialist in school who could upskill staff on Glow
54	It to be easier to access
55	Refresher on how to make best use of glow.
56	Computers that are up to date and actually work
57	IT Skills development
58	how to use glow

59	GLOW would need to be used consistently. Currently I rarely use GLOW as our council have their own email system and find it too hard to find what I need from GLOW. I only go there if there is something specific that I know to find.
60	Already use it effectively.
61	I currently use Glow for the onedrive facility but a course explaining how the tiles are used etc would be helpful. I know I do not make full use of the resources currently.
62	I am comforatble using Glow, as long as I know where to access resources.
63	No support to use glow
64	Training
65	time... to have a go and to discuss with colleagues
66	Time to navigate and discuss and explore with colleagues.
67	Make it easier to navigate. Time given to share.
68	training
69	Advice on how to share.
70	None
71	Refresher on how to use
72	A well designed platform that links the GTC standards to specific professional development courses/learning opportunities.
73	in house training
74	Revisit Glow so that all staff / children can log in and use regularly.
75	Use this already.
76	Short online training session to demonstrate the opportunities for sharing information and learning
77	I would need training on how to use it in that way
78	Glow integration with a systems like Google Classrooms would be useful, we're still to gain access to this in the Western Isles despite it being readily available.

5. What other areas would you want your school to collaborate on as part of our Regional Improvement Collaborative?

1	Numeracy and Mathematics
2	The use of Digital Technologies in the classroom
3	HWB - strategies and sharing successful approaches.
4	Our main focus would be assessment and moderation in the BGE - very keen to do any collaborative work in this area.
5	Share resources across faculties
6	Mastery of Maths - being able to continue to train staff in the Mastery of Maths approach like I did last school year. Real shame to not have funding to do this and spread this excellent practice far and wide.
7	n/a
8	Developing a shared understanding of rurality and how it impacts on children. How multi-level teaching and learning is a positive not a negative
9	Unsure
10	Moderation
11	Diversity and Inclusion, specifically LGBT+
12	Hear from pupils who have successfully achieved despite their circumstances - what helped them achieve, what support did they need?
13	Showcasing what excellence looks like in Aberdeenshire schools. The schools who are excellent sharing what it is that they are doing and what it looks like in their setting.
14	How crossmarking is done in rural schools, with one teacher per subject
15	Use the newsletter to share information about really effective resources that are both pupil and teacher friendly.
16	Self evaluation
17	Facilitating of CPD events across the authority to enable us to work together to support each other.
18	Maybe shared religious leaders etc. either visiting around or doing discussions on Skype (or equivalent) so that we can hear first hand from those in the North of Scotland who are benefiting from their religious beliefs and more about them - it's hard for all rural areas to adequately represent the key religions in a meaningful way. Sharing more equipment and science experts around the area - maybe doing blocks of experiments? We don't all have the storage, money and expertise to do some really interesting experiments once a year and hook kids into science the way we should be, linking to real life and job skills. Create more career cards with photos and people examples talking about their day, their qualifications and what they like about their jobs - a whole set for land-based industries, hospitality (food and drink?), etc etc. around Scotland. Is there anything we can do with procurement - ALL buying certain items in bulk and distributing on a much larger (and more affordable) level? More linking of schools that are comparative and having termly calls/video conferencing to discuss effective initiatives?
19	sustaining schools in small rural communities - assisting with inspection and improvement criteria/approach for very small rural school (which in the main inspectors neither

	understand or like) - it is a very different job being HT of an isolated rural school - poverty is the same as in urban areas but the systems of support and access are severely lacking - how do we bring about systemic change and also find a different way to express our successes and achievements which is a more effective measure of our performance and improvement.
20	Any opportunities to reduce 'reinventing the wheel'
21	Small rural schools working together to establish ways of working to maximise efficiency and effectiveness particularly with multi-composite classes. Shared ideas of ways to keep it fresh for pupils and teachers who have been working together for 2+ years.
22	Areas highlighted above are main priorities.
23	Reporting to parents
24	ASN
25	Having the opportunity to observe fellow colleagues within, and outwith, our ASG to observe good practice and share effective strategies.
26	Skills through Play and Outdoor Learning.
27	Streamlined planning to allow for more focused assessment and moderation Stronger resources
28	Sharing resources across the whole curriculum
29	outdoor learning
30	n/a
31	attainment in rural situations professional development opportunities north of Perth rights respecting
32	Digital Training
33	N/A
34	N/A
35	Early years play based learning.
36	Digital learning
37	Please see above.
38	transition from primary to secondary science, transition from nat 5 courses to higher
39	How to develop the work of the visiting specialist teacher
40	Development time with other teachers of the Expressive Arts. Discussion on Assessment in BGE, specifically Drama.
41	literacy, tracking
42	Teacher leadership
43	Mental Health
44	Sharing resources
45	Numeracy and Literacy
46	Taking a collaborative approach to all/SIP aspects of education could benefit all - expertise, reduce workload...
47	Development of early numeracy.

48	Play throughout the stages.
49	Breaking down experiences and outcomes to ensure streamlined coverage of the curriculum across an authority / Scotland
50	Making thinking visible
51	Improving appropriate curricular choices and experiences for our pupils, not all linked to conventional attainment.
52	Global Citizenship and Community Partnerships Outdoor Learning Schools
53	Family Learning. Examples of taking forward Learning Logs, Rights Respecting Schools, outdoor education.
54	Health and Well being Numeracy Closing the gap
55	As a teacher who has not been teaching n Scotland for very long I would love to have some support with standards at N5 and Higher.

6. What support would you require to engage more effectively with the Regional Improvement Collaborative?

1	Given the geographical size of our Alliance, travel time and transport costs would be a challenge
2	HT currently get emails for NA. Is there a way to sign up for alerts at all re: any updates? I will follow on Twitter. Can those who sit on the NA for our LA be more visible or vocal?
3	Access to different authority approaches
4	Everyone says this but if staff aren't given time to engage with the RIC and then take their learning forward then they will not - and should not - be able to do it properly.
5	Funding
6	Time, a central contact to co-ordinate any support offered.
7	Feel very removed from the RIC - something that is mentioned in Area days but have no ownership of it
8	Face-to-face meetings
9	Round table opportunities for face to face discussion.
10	Effective communication
11	Again - time
12	Not sure
13	requlat emails and possibly a sharepoint just for Regional Improvement Collaborative
14	Time - that priceless commodity!
15	Who to contact and know what support is available.
16	More opportunities for other staff to attend sessions, other than SMT
17	Time - inservice? Although being part of an authority where inservice days are not consistent throughout the authority creates difficulties.
18	I'd like to do more, but the workload at school is just too much and the budget constraints prevent long distance travel/accommodation.
19	travel and accommodation funding and cover funding
20	Improve my IT Skills and awareness
21	Ways of working which do not entail another layer of expectation on an already over-whelming workload.
22	time and money
23	Training and coaching in the above mentioned areas and opportunity for this to be in our authority area.
24	None
25	Time constraints make this difficult.
26	more e.mail info please :)
27	Effective communication and time management.

28	Continue to offer opportunities for training within ASGs Consider webinar or training via live links
29	More time set aside for collaborative work across cluster schools and ASG.
30	Access to online learning/resources which can be done at a time and place of your choosing.
31	Workshops
32	regular up-dates
33	n/a
34	a point of contact
35	On-going communication and updates.
36	On going information and communication (including updates)
37	Collaboration and discussion with colleagues at school
38	CPD opportunities in Moray.
39	Time
40	BGE level moderation and standardisation, differentiation materials
41	Advanced planning/notice for collaboration to allow time to include in school WTA/planning
42	Visits from workstream members to school to share knowledge.
43	Again, better IT with faster broadband and upi to date PCs and iPads
44	Time to meet with colleagues
45	resources, links with departments
46	Time to meet together or engage in the RIC. Greater understanding of the purpose of it.
47	time and money
48	More direct information i.e. direct to our staff email accounts
49	Time
50	Unknown
51	CPD
52	Organisation of creating support groups would be needed
53	More information
54	Advice on its role.
55	Not sure as yet
56	Quality Assurance and Moderation
57	Continue regular information sharing
58	Keeping resources streamlined is important. Often there are too many emails and materials which means that staff is overloaded.
59	Access on line/via GLOW for training and to share knowledge/experiences to allow me to engage at time/place of my choosing

60	I would need to know what it was and who was in it. I would also want to talk to real people rather than doing things over video links. In practice this would mean meetings with a specific and narrow focus.

7. Please add any ideas that you have to support the development of the Northern Alliance. In doing so, please consider how you could contribute and what added value could there be from your experience?

1	Keep the number of streams small - we can't do everything at the same time and it is better to do a few things well rather than a lot of things badly.
2	More Northern Alliance Progressions like the numeracy one would be excellent.
3	A hub for faculty resources from all contributors
4	There needs to be a clearer link to what the NA RIC is doing that is having a direct impact on learners in each area covered by the RIC and also, for teaching staff, what the RIC can do for teachers to improve practise.
5	I didn't know this existed until the Headteacher sent an email out asking us to complete a survey.
6	Focus groups that include teachers and PSAs
7	Professional knowledge and understanding of ACES, and the impact of trauma and loss on behaviour to support behaviour management in school. Mental health. I am a trained level 8 Forest School Leader, Head Teacher and professional with a passion for supporting children and families, using restorative approaches to behaviour management, and nurturing approaches, with successful results.
8	Regularly network events for specific areas: literacy, attainment, LGBT+ etc.
9	Communicate. Presently very little idea about this.
10	.
11	Nothing beats face to face meetings as it allows also a sharing of ideas with colleagues in a natural, discussion way that simply cannot be replicated by technology-assisted meeting. An annual meeting at the very least is hugely valuable, as proven by the NAEL meetings
12	I think most teachers, and SMT in schools are working at capacity, as far as time and budget. We must get creative to help reduce this, and associated stress, to allow more time for contributions to the NA and similar groups. There seems to be a lot of 'reinventing the wheel' happening all around Scotland - surely there could be basic shared lessons online across all stages and curricular areas with links to tried and tested resources by now? I think we should get better at linking businesses and schools, teaching skills as the focus and giving children real-life taster sessions to build work ethic and resilience. I also think we need to think across the NA about issues affecting the region and plan accordingly - what skills are lacking? Where are the gaps? What can we do to prevent children from heading into a life of drugs and addiction? What can we do to better prepare people to look after their physical and mental health? What support can we offer young people who are heading down a difficult path? (As a region - as a larger, more powerful group of professionals with a wide range of skills and expertise?) How could I contribute? I will do what I can. I have experience in different areas within the Northern Alliance.
13	would love to contribute, but as a HT with no class teacher I have no chance of getting out of school and can't afford to travel for work and pay my own expenses.

14	Being part of the Emerging Literacy Workflow has been inspiring and an excellent example of how shared working can have impact. To have this approach for other Curricular areas would be amazing.
15	I would be pleased to work with a group of headteachers from one or two-teacher schools to explore ways of streamlining the role of a teaching head and keeping relationships fresh and learning approaches varied to improve engagement.
16	There is no point having fancy plans without providing money to release teachers (and not just for one-off events, but for linked collaboration and development time) and for resources and materials; or without providing time and space for collaboration and reflection.
17	Better communication and clarity.
18	Formation of a Northern Alliance Music Heads of Service/Instructors Forum for sharing geographically specific ideas.
19	Ongoing literacy development...happy to share with others.
20	We're looking forward to what is being developed as part of the numeracy project.
21	Recognising good practice in all schools and allowing for this to be shared. Could curricular coordinators be organised from across the cluster schools to allow for the development of consistency, best practice and perhaps directed by Northern Alliance.
22	N/A
23	n/a
24	representative within schools (secondary)
25	N/A
26	N/A
27	Regular updates regarding progress / documentation etc. Video / Skype Presentations available for Collegiate / Professional Development.
28	lots of resources for curriculum development, leadership experience and knowledge
29	Use short films to promote Northern Alliance, own TV channel on You Tube or equivalent
30	Any opportunities for teachers of the Expressive Arts to share good practice and also to share development of materials would be appreciated. The impact our subjects can have within schools is limited, with Moray being a small authority and also with limited EA provision across both the primary & secondary sectors.
31	I feel that I don't know much about the Northern Alliance and its remit - this would be a good start.
32	Bring together teachers with similar interests to collaborate and feed back to their schools.
33	Improved professional practise.

34	Drop box for ideas
35	I have really enjoyed being part of the emerging literacy group. I would be interested in a similar group for number, especially in the upper years.
36	Experienced colleagues that could work with teachers, in the classroom, on implementing/demonstrating said initiatives.
37	Extending Early Years practice and pedagogy as a model to close attainment gaps in early primary.
38	A link on GLOW to areas of development within the Northern Alliance would be good. Sending resources to this one location, rather than to staff would encourage use of the site and would save time finding materials.
39	Gross motor control Fine motor control Assessing memory and activities to promote short term memory
40	I am, at this stage unsure exactly what the remit of the Northern Alliance is and what its intended purpose is. Once I know this I am certain that there is a lot I could contribute.
41	Workload issues must be addressed before any thought will be given to developing Northern Alliance - tackling the bureaucracy and needless paperwork that is demanded by the current systems in place and ensuring that pupil well-being is concentrated on before any new initiatives are introduced.