

Annual Plan 2021/22 and 2020/21 Progress Report

Our Children, Their Future



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SECTION ONE: FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, Policy Lead for Education



I am pleased to be able to present to you Argyll and Bute Council's Annual Education Plan for our educational establishments and services. This plan sends an important message about the significance which Argyll and Bute Council places on the delivery of Education.

The Education Vision and Strategy: Our Children, Their Future, contains six key objectives. We have continued their use in this plan as our key drivers for raising educational attainment and achievement for all children and young people in Argyll and Bute and as part of our improvement strategy, we intend to review and update this key policy during Session 2021/22.

The Annual Plan helps us to recognise and celebrate a wide range of the work of the Service, to celebrate both our young people and our staff. We have a great deal to be proud of in Argyll and Bute and this plan illustrates a number of the successes and achievements of our children and young people, our staff, as well as those of our schools and services. It is right to be proud of these achievements, but equally important to acknowledge that further improvement is still required.

Our plan draws together a range of information on the work of the Education Service for pupils, staff, parents and carers and our communities. It is aimed at ensuring that all of our children and young people are provided with the best possible educational experience and are best-supported to achieve their full potential. An example of this and one of which we are particularly proud, is our commitment to supporting the mental wellbeing of our children and young people as we move from recovery to renewal. Our strategy includes a range of help, support and advice which are available and includes our counselling in school service, our ongoing work to develop a trauma informed work force, our commitment to additional staff and our partnership working with three outdoor centres that have afforded all of our schools an outdoor learning experience.

As a service we are taking forward an Education Change Programme that will be the subject of a major engagement exercise with a wide range of stakeholders which will run through until 2022. Through this engagement we will ensure that we are well placed to respond to a period of significant national change, challenge and development for Scottish Education. This programme has equity and excellence of provision at its core, along with the needs of our children and families firmly at the centre.

The ongoing presence of the COVID-19 virus continues to present an unprecedented challenge for education in Argyll and Bute and schools across Scotland. Remote learning, once again, from January to March played a vital role in maintaining education provision and in supporting Argyll and Bute's children and young people, and I'd once again like to thank sincerely all of our teaching staff, parents, carers and pupils for their commitment and support during that difficult time. It is the commitment and effective partnership working through these circumstances which ensures we are able to continue to meet the needs of our children and young people.

Once again, I would like to thank all of our children, young people, staff, families and communities for their continuing support as we work to build a better future together.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yvonne". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Yvonne

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director, Education

Our Vision is to ensure that together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that our teachers and staff returned to school in August supporting the Education and wellbeing of all of our pupils before a return to remote learning followed by a phased return to face to face learning for pupils.

The Education Service is proud of the remote learning that was delivered and continues to make use of digital learning platforms to enhance our learners' experiences. In session 2021-22 we will maintain our focus on recovery, renewal and improvement.

In line with national guidance from the Scottish Government, augmented by specific local advice, the Service will continue to keep abreast of changing circumstances as we move forwards, in particular, recommendations from both the Audit Scotland Report and the OECD review of Curriculum for Excellence.

Our Education Change Programme, which aims to deliver new agile ways of teaching and learning and improved leadership structures, will be the subject of a major engagement exercise with a wide range of stakeholders which will run through until 2022, while we continue to deliver services of the highest quality that inspire all our learners, improve learning experiences and strengthen our communities while continually improving our services for everyone who uses them.

The preparation and publication of this Annual Plan, as required by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act. 2000, places a focus on health and wellbeing and, importantly, performance reporting for Education in Argyll and Bute. It is consistent with the Scottish Government's requirements and the Regional Improvement Plan for the Northern Alliance Collaborative of which Argyll and Bute is a part.

Section 4 of the plan highlights the key objectives and actions to be addressed by the Service and by schools and establishments as an integral aspect of their improvement planning processes for session 2021/2022. I hope you find the Annual Plan both informative and useful.

The commitment of all our staff who are part of the Education Service enables us to continue to take forward our very high aspirations. Our continued focus is to ensure that we provide the best possible learning experiences for all our children, young people and adults – experiences which support and endorse our commitment to ambition, excellence and equality.

A copy of this plan will now be sent to Scottish Ministers, as required by the legislation. Argyll and Bute welcomes this step, allowing us to develop and foster increasing and deeper knowledge of the successes and challenges facing Scottish Education, to engage with and share good practice and further our commitment to improving the lives of all children and young people in Argyll and Bute. The Education Service always strives to make improvements, and we welcome any suggestions you may have which will help Argyll and Bute Council's Education Service to make, through its planning, the greatest positive impact on outcomes for our children, young people and communities.

Douglas Hendry,
Executive Director – Education



SECTION 2: OUR CONTINUING RESPONSE TO COVID-19

COVID-19 has continued to affect all those who live and work across Argyll and Bute during session 2020-21. August 2020 saw a full reopening of schools with restrictions, followed by a return to remote learning in January 2021 and then a phased return back to face to face learning between February and April 2020. It has been extremely challenging for all involved – children and young people, parents and staff.

As an Education Service tackling and addressing the challenges of COVID-19, our response has been, and continues to be, driven by the advice and guidance issued by the Scottish Government in relation to both health and educational issues. The six Education Recovery Workstreams set up in session 2019/2020, which articulate to the key priorities of the Scottish Government's own Covid Education Recovery Group (CERG), have continued to lead our response to the pandemic.

In Education, since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced, our work has had seven main focuses:

1. Wellbeing, Transitions and Safeguarding.

All aspects of our response to and planning around COVID-19 have had the government's scientifically-grounded health advice at their centre. The return to school of all children in August 2021 was once again informed by careful planning around activities and movement in schools, cleaning and transport.

Schools in Argyll and Bute already knew their pupils very well before COVID-19, and such knowledge was applied effectively in addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged children and their families. Our comprehensive programme of fulfilling free school meals (FSM) continued over both holidays and periods of lock down and a hardship payment was made in December 2020 to those in receipt of a free school meal. Head Teachers and staff maintained patterns of regular contact with vulnerable families in the form of welfare checks.

During lockdown, there was coordinated collaboration and planning between the Education, Social Work, Health and Educational Psychology services to look after those children and families identified as vulnerable, or who had become newly vulnerable as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Planning is in place to ensure this continues.

As children made a phased return to schools from February 2021, schools were encouraged to focus initially on wellbeing developments that are already being implemented such as nurture approaches and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS).

Transitions and wellbeing training sessions were delivered by the Educational Psychology Service to staff from primary and secondary schools, with a session for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) practitioners also taking place.

The Equality and Inclusion team worked with the Educational Psychology Service team to ensure new guidance and support was in place for children and young people who need a phased return to school after lockdown.

All children transitioning to primary and secondary school received a virtual transition via digital technology, with some afforded a face to face experience where COVID guidance and local circumstances allowed.

It was agreed by the Community Services Committee that consideration of a seventh year at secondary school be possible for those pupils with severe and complex needs to prepare for transition into adult life post-school.

Much work has been undertaken to support wellbeing. A set of resources to support our policy, *Our Children, Their Mental Health*, has been kept up to date and promoted within Education, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and third sector to support all of our children and young people. This included Trauma Training modules which ensure appropriate support for children and young people, focus on all relationships and acknowledgment that many staff will also have found recent events and the move between phases of COVID to be traumatic.

2. To ensure that educational provision remained as full and stimulating as possible in the new context of Home Learning.

In August 2020 Argyll and Bute Council received £447,000 from the Scottish Government to address digital inequity. The funding was to be directed to ensuring that all pupils were able to engage effectively with online learning through having an appropriate digital device in the home. The funding was also designed to address issues with digital connectivity for pupils across the authority.

As a result of this funding, the Education Service purchased 800 Chromebooks and 556 iPads, all of which were distributed to the households which individual schools had identified as experiencing digital inequity. The knowledge each school had of disadvantage among its own pupils and families was central to ensuring the devices were equitably distributed.

As well as the above devices, 254 mini digital routers with associated SIM cards were purchased and delivered to households across the authority where household internet bandwidth was preventing engagement with online learning.

Throughout the year the Education Service has continued to develop the programme of professional learning for teachers in providing high-quality learning and teaching to pupils via online platforms, particularly Google Classroom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams. The authority Digital learning Team provided weekly webinars for staff in key areas of online provision across different platforms, catering for different degrees of confidence and expertise, and ensuring learning progression. To supplement such sessions, formal training events were held for staff on In-service training days, covering both Google and Microsoft platforms, and delivered by our authority partners at Google and Microsoft.

During this period, the authority Digital Learning Depute Head Teacher – appointed in conjunction with the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative and e-Sgoil – was effective in sharing further local and national learning opportunities with teachers, organising and leading such training, promoting and facilitating engagement with the Scottish Government’s National e-Learning Offer and ensuring Argyll and Bute’s voice was prominent at regional and national level in relation to developing digital learning and policy.

In December 2020, the Scottish Government announced that, as a result of high levels of COVID-19 infection, schools would not reopen in January 2021, and a further period of remote learning would be introduced for all pupils in Scotland.

The Education Service and all schools had already planned for a period of pupils learning at home before the official closure of schools. Thus, schools and pupils were well-prepared: pupils and families were clear on how to access the learning which would be moving to online platforms, and, from the start, many teachers were innovative and imaginative in their provision of learning. Good practice was shared among schools, and teachers were supported by the authority’s Digital Learning team in developing their expertise with online formats. The views of teachers, learners and parents on the delivery of home learning were gathered, and acted upon, improving provision. Statistical data shows that the majority of Argyll and Bute’s learners engaged strongly with home learning, and the feedback from families around the provision of home learning has been overwhelmingly positive.

3. To ensure that those put at the greatest disadvantage by COVID-19 were supported, particularly in terms of their ability to access the digitally-provided learning which was central to education continuing.

A second purchasing programme in partnership with the Scottish Government has ensured that learners and their families will continue to benefit from more digital devices at home and guaranteed connectivity during recovery and beyond.

4. To provide childcare support for the families of key workers vital to the country’s response to COVID-19.

Guidance on full safe opening was again updated by the COVID Recovery Workstream in August 2020 in line with the Scottish Government guidance. Blended ELC placements between indoor settings and childminders and indoor settings and outdoor settings were supported in Argyll and Bute.

In January, following the decision that most ELC buildings would not fully reopen, most Key Worker and Vulnerable children were supported within their own settings.

Registration for ELC and for Primary 1 was moved to an online virtual application that worked very well and will be retained and improved for use in future years.

Also in this period we agreed to participate in a Scottish Government pilot that ensures families who defer entry to Primary one for children of August-February birthdays

automatically receive an additional year of funded Early Learning and Childcare. This was very well received by parents whose children had missed a period of learning.

During the period of school closure and phased reopening between January and April 2021, the primary and secondary-aged children of key workers were looked after and received their educational provision within Hubs. Unlike the previous period of school closure in 2020, such pupils were accommodated in their own schools rather than in central hubs, which was a response to the feedback received from parents and carers, as well as from teaching staff, after the initial lockdown in Spring 2020.

5. To plan and prepare for the period of recovery after the reopening of schools, acknowledging that many children and their families would require focused support to re-engage with education in school, and that pupils would require support to get back on-track with their learning.

Argyll and Bute's schools have again been consistently and effectively responsive to the directives of the Scottish Government. Planning for all pupils to return to school has been rigorous across the authority, with support and guidance from Education Managers and Officers a constant factor. All education establishments continue to have contingency plans in place for any return to remote learning and effective communication with parents/carers from both schools and the Education Authority has been a priority.

The Education Authority clearly recognise the risks which periods of school closure have posed for learners' progress. It is working with schools to ensure that all aspects of educational provision balance children's welfare, health and wellbeing needs with the requirement to ensure that any gaps in learning caused by school closure are addressed. Assessing learners' progress in literacy, numeracy and other curricular areas, in order that the next steps in learning can be identified, has remained a priority.

6. To ensure that senior pupils in secondary schools whose SQA examinations have been cancelled have the same opportunities to progress successfully to their desired destination as they would in normal circumstances.

The cancellation of all SQA examinations in 2021 required schools and the Local Authority to follow the SQA's Alternative Certification Model (ACM) to ensure that all candidates received fair and accurate SQA Awards. In a change from the 2020 ACM, teaching staff were required to use only demonstrated attainment to support the Provisional Result(s) that were submitted by schools to the SQA by 25th June 2021.

Within the ACM there has been a significant priority placed on moderation to ensure fair and accurate judgements are made on the assessments completed by our young people. Teaching staff have undertaken additional Professional Development courses provided by SQA to ensure their judgements are in line with National expectations. Significant moderation of assessments used has been undertaken within schools, across the Local Authority and in some cases with schools in other Local Authorities.

Provisional Results were shared with learners on 25th June 2021 via e-mail and a letter was sent out confirming these. Supporting SQA documentation on eligibility to appeal provisional results was shared with learners and parents. Candidates will receive a certificate of their awards from the SQA on 10th August 2021.

We are also working closely with colleges and universities to ensure that our learners are appropriately rewarded in the courses and apprenticeships which many of our school-age young people were undertaking in collaboration with these institutions.

7. To ensure that, in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), our ability to offer 1140 hours per year of high-quality pre-school education to every child remains on-track.

In June 2020, there were 1,530 children accessing 2,039 ELC spaces across a broad range of Early Learning and Childcare establishments, with approximately 160 children sharing their Early Learning and Childcare hours across more than one establishment.

Further to the Scottish Government's announcement on 30th July 2020 regarding the reopening of Early Learning and Childcare settings, we continued to deliver the 1140 hours model, with all settings opening from 11th August 2020. Scottish Government advice was followed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, with particular regard to blended placements.

SECTION THREE: OUR CHILDREN, THEIR FUTURE

3.1 Argyll and Bute Education Vision: Our Children, Their Future

Argyll and Bute Council's Vision 'Realising our Potential Together' is underpinned by 4 key values:

- We involve and listen to our customers and communities;
- We take pride in delivering best value services;
- We are open, honest, fair and inclusive, and
- We respect and value everyone.

The Education Service is the largest of the Services within Argyll and Bute and accounts for approximately 56% of the total expenditure of the Council. The Council offices are located in Lochgilphead with three education offices based in Dunoon, Oban and Helensburgh.

The Education Service is statutorily required as prescribed in the 'Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000' to provide school education for every child of school age to support the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child to his or her fullest potential.

Our aspiration is to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up. Our vision is that together we will realise **ambition, excellence** and **equality** for all. Our vision sends a signal about the importance we attach to education, is simple in message and is recognised by everyone. This vision is effectively conveyed in this illustration:



The Education vision is underpinned by our values: **respect, openness** and **fairness**. This vision is being delivered for all our children through the following 6 key objectives.

We will:

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all;
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people;
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;
- Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life;
- Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement, and
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.

3.2 Our Children and Young People

Argyll and Bute, the second largest local authority by area, covers approximately 9% of the total land area of Scotland. Argyll and Bute has the third sparsest population density (0.12 persons per hectare). The population of around 86,000 is distributed across an area of just under 2,700 square miles. It is approximately 100 miles long from the Isle of Coll in the north to Southend in Kintyre, and 90 miles wide from Bridge of Orchy in the east to the Isle of Tiree in the west.

More than half of Argyll and Bute's population live in rural areas, as classified by the Scottish Government's Urban-Rural Classification (2016). A further 35% live in communities with populations between 3,000 and 10,000 people designated as small towns. Less than a fifth of the population live in an urban area with a population of over 10,000 people.

Argyll and Bute is an area of outstanding natural beauty with mountains, sea lochs, and 23 inhabited islands. The geography provides challenges for service delivery, particularly in communications and transport.

3.3 The Population and Demographic Profile of Argyll and Bute

The total population of Argyll and Bute is 86,260 based on the 2018 mid-year population estimate produced by the National Records of Scotland (NRS). Between 1998 and 2018 the population of Argyll and Bute fell by 5.9% with positive migration into the area but not enough to counteract the greater number of deaths than births. Taking into account the national context the NRS 2016-based population projections suggests an east-west split across Scotland in terms of population increase and decrease, with the following local authorities' populations projected to decrease over the period 2016 to 2026: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, South Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire.

The change in population is different across the four areas of Argyll and Bute, as shown below (from 2011 to 2016 NRS small area population mid-year estimates).

Helensburgh and Lomond – 0.3%
 Bute and Cowal – 5.0%
 Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay – 3.8%
 Oban, Lorn and the Isles + 0.9%

The decline in population experienced to date and that projected in the future presents a significant challenge to the overall viability of the area. This challenge is made more difficult by the variation in population changes over the areas within our Local Authority.

In addition to the changes in total population, the demographic balance is also changing. The table below shows the change in population over age cohorts projected for 2016 to 2026 and also the changes in demographics from 1998 to 2018.

Age	Change (1998 to 2018)	Projections (2016 to 2026)
0 to 15	- 25.6%	- 6.4%
16 – 64	- 11.2%	- 9.8%
65 and over	+33.7%	+ 14.0%

More people living longer is a real success. However, demographic changes do create a number of challenges for us in Argyll and Bute. These challenges range from:

- Changes to service delivery requirements for Community Planning Partnership partners;
- The availability of people to join the overall workforce;
- A smaller pool of people creating wealth, and
- How to enhance the economic or community contribution made by people.

Based on available figures at 2016, one in five of the population of Argyll and Bute (15.2%) is aged between 0 and 19 years (NRS Mid-2016 Small Area Population Estimates for 2011 Data Zones).

Age group	Number	Percentage of total population
Under 5	3,848	4.4%
5-15	9,390	10.8%
16-19	3,894	4.5%
20-29	9,218	10.6%
30-44	13,077	15.0%
45-64	26,147	30.0%
65 and over	21,556	24.7%
Total population	87,130	100%

Table 1: Argyll and Bute's Population (NRS Mid-2016 Small Area Population Estimates for 2011 Data Zones)

3.4 Multiple Deprivation in Argyll and Bute

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the official tool for identifying and comparing deprivation levels across Scotland. SIMD identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to tackle deprivation. The SIMD is produced in terms of data zones, with data zones being ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 6,976 (least deprived)

SIMD calculates deprivation across seven 'domains':

- Income
- Employment
- Health
- Education, Skills and Training
- Access to Services
- Housing
- Crime

Levels of deprivation in each domain are calculated using a selection of indicators. Relative levels of deprivation are then calculated on the basis of weighting and combining the individual deprivation domains. The highest weightings are given to the Income and Employment Domains (28% each). The Access (to services) domain, which affects more data zones in Argyll and Bute than any of the other domains, has a relatively low weighting in the Overall index (9%). The other four domains taken into consideration for SIMD are Health, Housing, Crime and Education, Skills and Training

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) has been used to identify pockets of overall deprivation within Argyll and Bute. Based on the SIMD 2020, 13 out of the Council area's 125 data zones were identified as being amongst the 20% most overall deprived data zones in Scotland. All of these data zones are located within the area's towns. None of Argyll and Bute's rural data zones fall into the 20% most overall deprived data zones in Scotland. However, deprivation can, and does, occur elsewhere. Because the SIMD identifies concentrations of deprivation, smaller pockets and instances of individual deprivation are not picked up by the index.

3.5 Supporting all of our Children and Young People

The Education Service is currently responsible for:

- Seventy primary schools;
- Four 3-18 schools;
- Five secondary schools;
- One joint campus;
- One school for pupils with complex additional needs;
- Two adult learning centres, and a Youth Centre, and
- Three Early Learning and Childcare Centres.

All schools, with the exception of one very small primary school, have a Parent Council as anticipated and defined within the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

Pupil Roll in Argyll and Bute

The total school pupil roll stands at 10,211 (September 2020 Census), comprising 5,614 primary pupils, 4,535 secondary pupils and 62 pupils in the school for pupils with complex additional needs. This compares with previous sessions, shown below:

Session	Total Pupil Roll
2020/21	10,211
2019/20	10,192
2018/19	10,303
2017/18	10,269
2016/17	10,316
2015/16	10,445
2014/15	10,565
2013/14	10,675

In 2020/21 our children and young people were supported in their learning by:

- 780.57 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers;
- 82.70 FTE Classroom Assistants
- 212.45 FTE ASN Assistants
- 11.88 FTE Pupil Support Assistants
- 94.41 FTE Clerical Assistants
- 17.80 FTE Technicians
- 169.86 FTE Childcare and Education Workers

Early Learning and Childcare Provision

Figures at June 2021

There are 1,507 children accessing 2,316 Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) places across a broad range of ELC establishments with approximately 90 children sharing their ELC hours across more than one setting.

Early Learning and Childcare spaces are currently available in 3 Council Nursery Centres, 49 ELC settings, 4 ELC Gaelic ~~bases~~, 24 voluntary, privately and independently managed ELC establishments, 3 outdoor nurseries (two voluntary and one local authority) and 29 funded partner childminders.

624 spaces are currently being used by children in the voluntary, private and independently managed ELC establishments. In addition, 67 children are receiving Early Learning and Childcare as a 2 year old under the Children and Young People Act criteria (40 with partner providers, 21 with local authority, and with 6

childminders). Also, we have 43 three and four year olds receiving funded ELC with a partner childminder

Early Learning and Childcare is available within 54 services provided in schools which are managed by Head Teachers. The largest services are supported by Lead Childcare and Education Workers. The three stand-alone nurseries are managed by Heads of Centre, supported by a senior manager within each provision.

Community Learning Service

The Community Learning team support adults and young people to identify their own individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and take action to bring about change for themselves and their communities. The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework sets out the strategic priorities for Community Learning:

- learning, personal development and active citizenship; and
- stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities.

As part of the budget planning process for 2021-22, it was agreed to transfer the Community Learning Service from Education to Live Argyll. Live Argyll is a charitable company set up by Argyll and Bute Council to deliver a range of services including libraries, leisure facilities, Active Schools, archives, museum, sport development, halls, community centres and community lets.

The transfer of the Community Learning Service to Live Argyll was completed on the 30th June 2021 and the Trust now has responsibility for the delivery of work with young people, work with adults and leading the production and implementation of the Argyll and Bute Community Learning and Development Plan.

There are common priorities shared by Live Argyll and Community Learning and it is anticipated that areas such as volunteer development, literacy, health and wellbeing, community engagement and work with young people will be enhanced by the move, making for a better delivery of services to the public.

Contractual management arrangements are already established with regular reports and scrutiny of performance via the Community Services Committee. An Education Officer will ensure that effective links continue between Education and Live Argyll (Community Learning).

Support for Children and Young People with Severe and Complex Needs

A range of provisions to support the needs of children and young people, identified as having severe and complex needs, as described in the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act are available across a number of schools within the Authority.

The majority of children and young people with additional support needs, including those with complex needs, access their education provision in their local pre-school centre or mainstream school. The Pupil Support Service and Educational Psychology Service provide advice, guidance and training for staff on

meeting additional support needs in mainstream settings, as well as offering guidance on the implementation of effective universal early intervention approaches. In addition, these services work along with partner agencies, following the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) practice model, to provide direct support for pupils and families, as required.

To enable access to a learning centre/enhanced provision for pupils with more complex ASN within their geographical area we have developed a learning centre facility within a school in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. This session there are also physical adaptations taking place in three schools to provide low sensory and high sensory rooms. This increases the availability of an individualised and enhanced curriculum to better meet the needs of the children and young people within their community.

Gaelic Medium Education

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) is available in five Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provisions: Bowmore in Islay, Rockfield in Oban, Salen in Mull, Sandbank in Dunoon and Tiree. GME is available in 7 primary schools: Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen, Bunessan, Strath of Appin, Sandbank and Tiree High School (primary department). The pupil roll in each Gaelic Medium (GM) provision is growing with Salen Primary School and Tiree Primary School having more pupils learning through the medium of Gaelic than English.

There is continuity and progression of language skills from primary to secondary in the associated secondary establishments: Islay High, Oban High, Tobermory High, Tiree High and Dunoon Grammar School. Four secondary establishments provide a fluent and learner pathway for students and one provides a fluent pathway only. Several of the secondary schools have used the skills of their existing staff to deliver other curricular areas through the medium of Gaelic, with further plans to extend this opportunity through the use of digital technology, allowing pupils to access learning experiences in schools other than their own.

All educational primary establishments providing GME have a Curriculum Rationale which details the bespoke requirements for young people learning through the medium of Gaelic and the need to create an ethos of Gaelic across the whole school. Secondary schools delivering GME have started to develop a bespoke rationale. School Improvement Plans include a designated section detailing specific GM priorities, targets and how they will be overtaken across the school session. These priorities align with Argyll and Bute's Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2023. Attainment data for GM pupils is tracked separately and the data is shared with the education authority to ensure a parity of quality assurance with English Medium provision. The resulting information is used to plan next steps in improvement within each provision and, collectively, as an education authority.

Gaelic Medium staff, across all sectors, are offered professional learning opportunities specific to GME each academic session – some delivered at an Argyll and Bute level and others at a national level. School leadership teams have regular 'Business Meetings' to discuss school improvement strategies specific to GME.

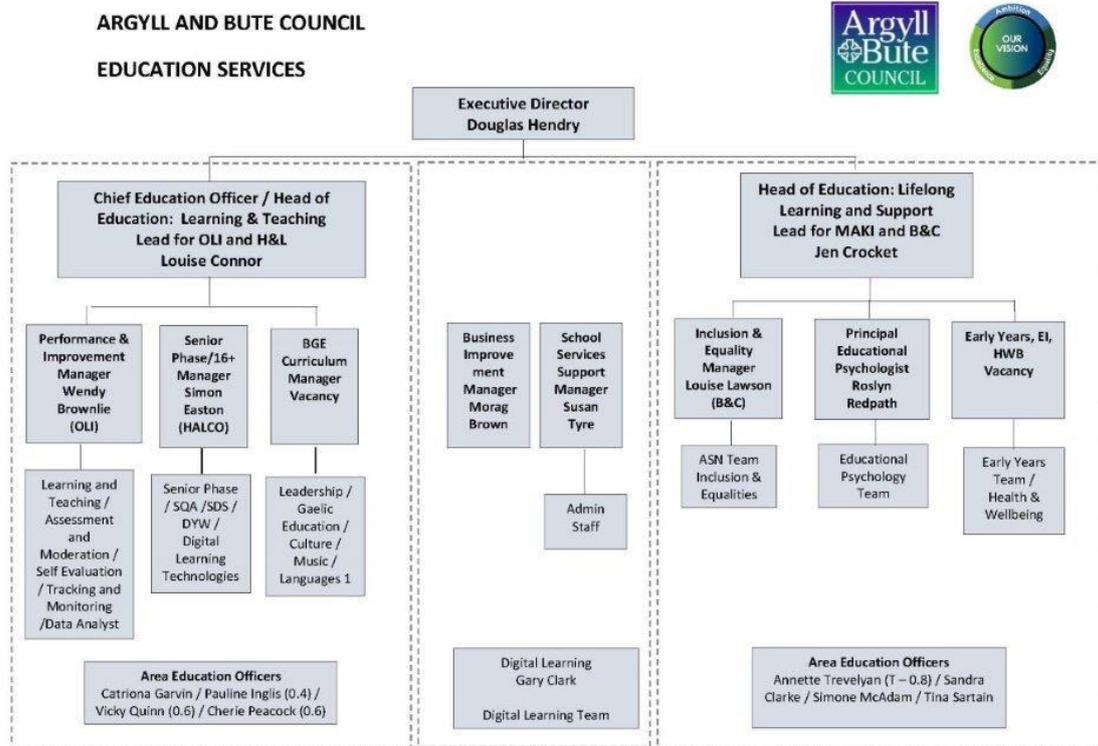
3.6 Resourcing Our Plan: The Education Budget

The budget for Community Services, Education is £85,072,970 as per Service Business Outcomes.

Service Business Outcomes		2021/22 Budget £
BO106	Our looked after young people are supported by effective corporate parenting	1,674,041
BO107	The support and lifestyle needs of our children, young people, and their families are met	8,385,938
BO108	All our children and young people are supported to realise their potential	76,997,108
BO116	We engage and work with our customers, staff and partners	33,333
BO117	We encourage creativity and innovation to ensure our workforce is fit for the future	-20,132
BO999	Central/Management Costs	371,963
	Total	87,442,252

Further funding has been provided by Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) which is detailed in **Section 4** of the plan.

3.7 Education Service: Organisation Chart



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July 2021

SECTION FOUR: THE POLICY CONTEXT FOR SCOTTISH EDUCATION

This continues to be a time of significant change, challenge and uncertainty for Education Services, particularly in light of the emergence of the COVID-19 virus. The global pandemic, the pace of change, the drive to improve services and the financial context combine to place increasing demands on the delivery of education. Despite these challenges, it is important that we remain ambitious to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people. Education is the most effective means that we have to improve the life chances of our children and young people. As we implement this Education Plan, where we look to renew, refresh and re-imagine our service delivery in light of the challenges and opportunities presented by this pandemic and the changes it has demanded, the health and wellbeing of all our children and young people remains at the heart of what we do.

4.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education

The 2017 document "The National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education: Achieving Excellence and Equity", published in December 2016, set out four National Priorities for Education. They are:

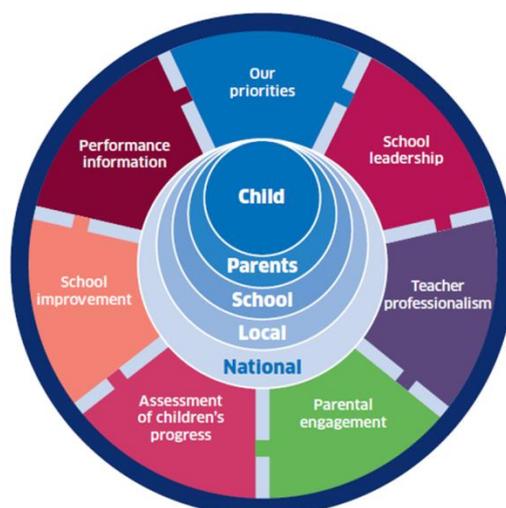
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and well-being, and
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

The improvement framework documentation notes further that:

"Everyone working in Scottish Education should be clear about how they can contribute to addressing these priorities. Local authority and school improvement plans should reflect these priorities and ensure the clear line of sight between local and national expectations. There may be further improvement priorities at school level based on local needs and self-evaluation."

Source: Page 2: 2017 National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education: Achieving Excellence and Equity.

These four priorities are set in the context of seven National Improvement Framework "drivers for improvement", summarised in the diagram below:



In addition to the National Improvement Framework, statutory guidance issued following the changes to the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, stressed a number of other important elements which should be included within local authorities' annual improvement plans. These include that:

“Education Authorities, in carrying out their school education functions, must have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, where:

- An education authority is making a decision of a strategic nature about the carrying out of its functions relating to school education, and
- An education authority is considering what steps to take to implement such a decision”.

The Authority must also seek and have “due regard” to the views of the following groups in relation to the Authority’s strategic decisions and steps to take to implement such decisions:

- a) The Head Teacher of such schools managed by the Authority as the Authority thinks appropriate;
- b) Such pupils as the Authority thinks appropriate;
- c) The parents of such pupils as the Authority thinks appropriate;
- d) The representatives of a trade union which appears to the authority to be representative of the teaching staff at such schools managed by the Authority as the Authority thinks appropriate;
- e) Such voluntary organisations as the Authority thinks appropriate, and
- f) Any other persons the Authority thinks appropriate.

The National Outcomes for Scotland include:

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;
- Young people are equipped through their education to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens;

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society, and
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

Further legislation and policies are in place which require to be taken account of when delivering Education Services. These include:

- The Education Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Acts 2004 and 2009;
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act;
- The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006;
- Teaching Scotland's Future: Report of a Review of Teacher Education (2010);
- Getting It Right For Every Child;
- Curriculum for Excellence;
- The Scottish Attainment Challenge;
- The National Improvement Framework;
- Raising Attainment For All;
- A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of ELC in Scotland;
- The Early Years Framework,
- Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, and
- Excellence and Equity during the COVID-19 Pandemic – Strategic Framework.

In addition the current national context and drivers will also influence how we deliver our Education Services ie

- Improving additional support for learning action plan (Morgan Review)
- The Promise findings of the Independent Care Review
- SQA Alternative Certification Model
- UNCRC incorporation
- OECD review of Curriculum for Excellence
- Audit Scotland Report
- Early Years expansion
- COP26 UN Climate Change Conference Glasgow November 2021

These are the driving forces behind the work of Education Services, reflecting national strategies such as the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education as well as local strategies for the delivery of services in Argyll and Bute.

The **Education Service Annual Plan for 2021/2022** has been prepared in compliance with the statutory guidance set out within the "*Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000*", Published by Scottish Government in March 2017.

It brings together a range of information from each of the areas of the Education Service in Argyll and Bute, reaffirming our shared vision for Education Services of **ambition, excellence and equality** for all. Our strategy for realising our shared vision is best explained by showing how our 6 key objectives link to each of the national drivers and improvement priorities.

Our Children Their Future (OCTF) Key Objectives	National Improvement Framework (NIF) Key Drivers for Improvement	National Improvement Framework (NIF) Key Priorities
Strengthen leadership at all levels	School Leadership	
	Teacher Professionalism	
Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement.	Parental Engagement	
Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.	Assessment of Children's Progress	Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.
Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life.		Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.
Raise educational attainment and achievement for all.	School Improvement	Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people.	Performance Information	Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged

SECTION FIVE: ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The following section of the plan details the progress that we have made in achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework, including through our use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) in meeting our statutory duties of reducing inequalities.

1. Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

There was no national (ACEL) data collection for P1, P4, P7 and S3, in June 2020 as a consequence of the Covid pandemic and resultant school closures,

Schools in Argyll and Bute continued to assess and track children and young people's skills in Literacy and Numeracy during session 2020-21, ensuring we have a robust knowledge around pupil levels of attainment. As we move from recovery this data will support us to ensure appropriate interventions are planned and implemented enabling learner progress. This data will be reported in the Annual Plan for 2022/23.

Our data shows that attainment across the authority from Primary 1-7 has dipped during the pandemic although progress in Primary 1 has been marginally less affected than progress at Primary 4 and 7. With reduced face to face interaction it is understandable that progress in talking and listening has been most affected and progress in numeracy least affected. Working in partnership with our Attainment Advisor and the Regional Improvement Collaborative, literacy and numeracy will remain a focus during our period of recovery, renewal and improvement.

Notably, this session, there have been high levels of engagement with virtual Career Long Professional Learning opportunities in Emerging Literacy across the authority. Effective use of Emerging Literacy progression frameworks have supported moderation activities across Early Level, which is leading to increased confidence and capacity in schools.

There has also been strong engagement with the Regional Improvement Collaborative Numeracy Officers with eleven schools participating in a numeracy Digitools Webinar and 32 practitioners enrolled in three virtual workshops. Networks have been established to support schools and clusters. This has enhanced career long professional learning and developed teacher confidence, providing validation for the work undertaken within Argyll and Bute. Feedback from schools has been very positive and schools report increased confidence in utilising a wider range of teaching approaches to meet the needs of learners.

Across Argyll and Bute we have 38 Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSOs), including five new volunteers this session, these representatives have continued to attend national events. Evidence demonstrates that QAMSOs are effectively supporting schools in the moderation process particularly within literacy and numeracy and that this engagement has led to positive impact on teacher professional judgement, understanding of standards and improvements in assessment procedures in schools.

In session 2021/22 we will use digital technology to increase and improve the quality

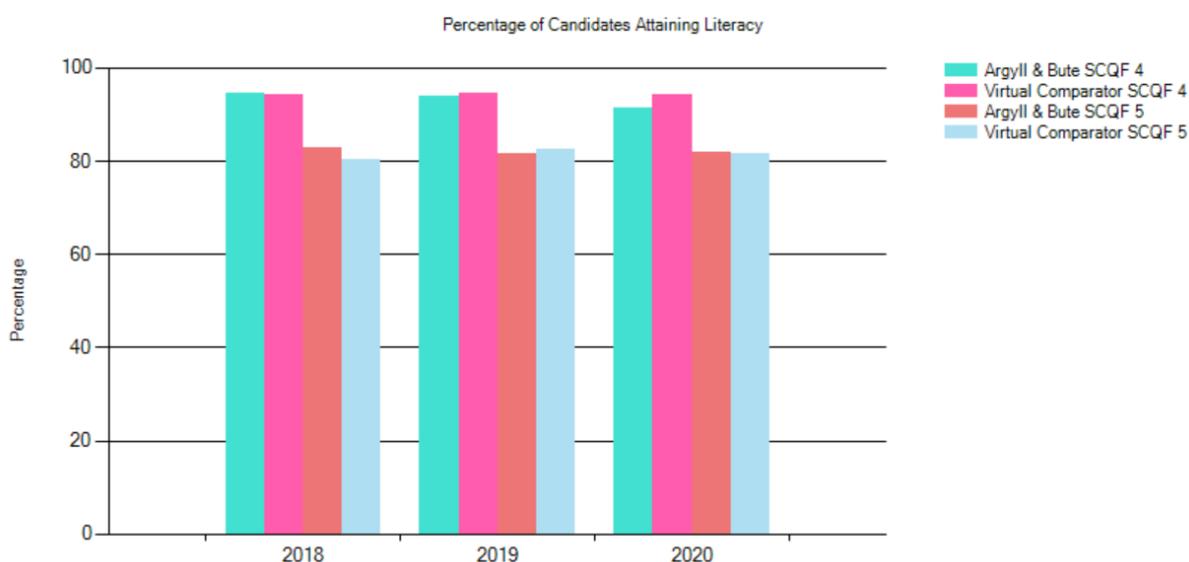
of moderation activities across clusters of schools.

As a result of remote learning many families reported feeling more included, involved and informed of their child’s learning and progress, we will continue to empower parents and families to support learners in their journey.

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy (Senior Phase)

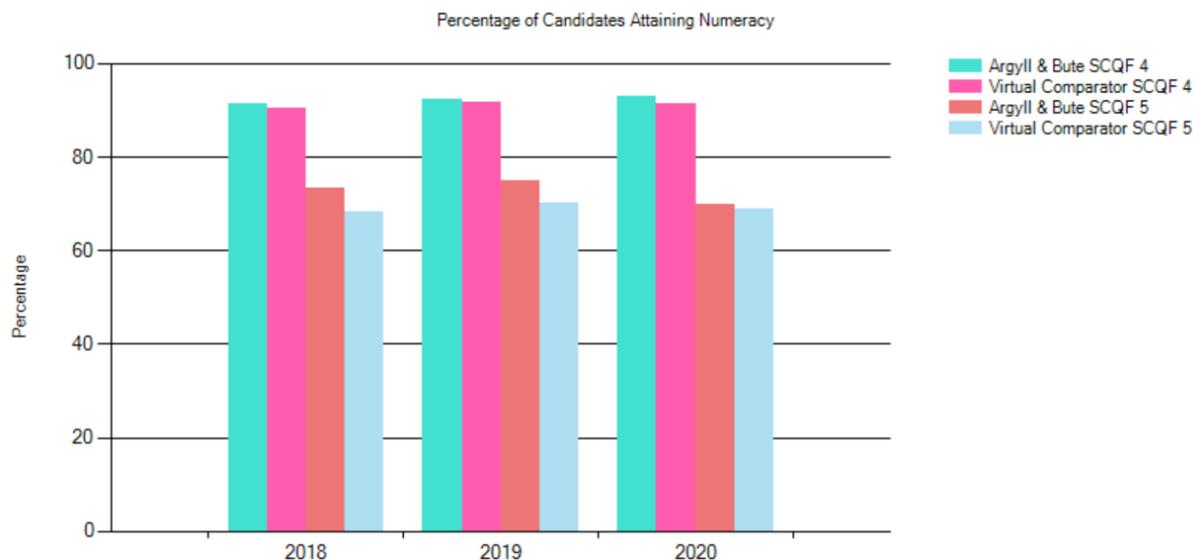
The percentage of young people in Argyll and Bute gaining literacy at SCQF level 4 (National 4) is below the Virtual Comparator however at SCQF level 5 (National 5) we are above the Virtual Comparator.

Improving Attainment in Literacy (S6 based on S4 roll)



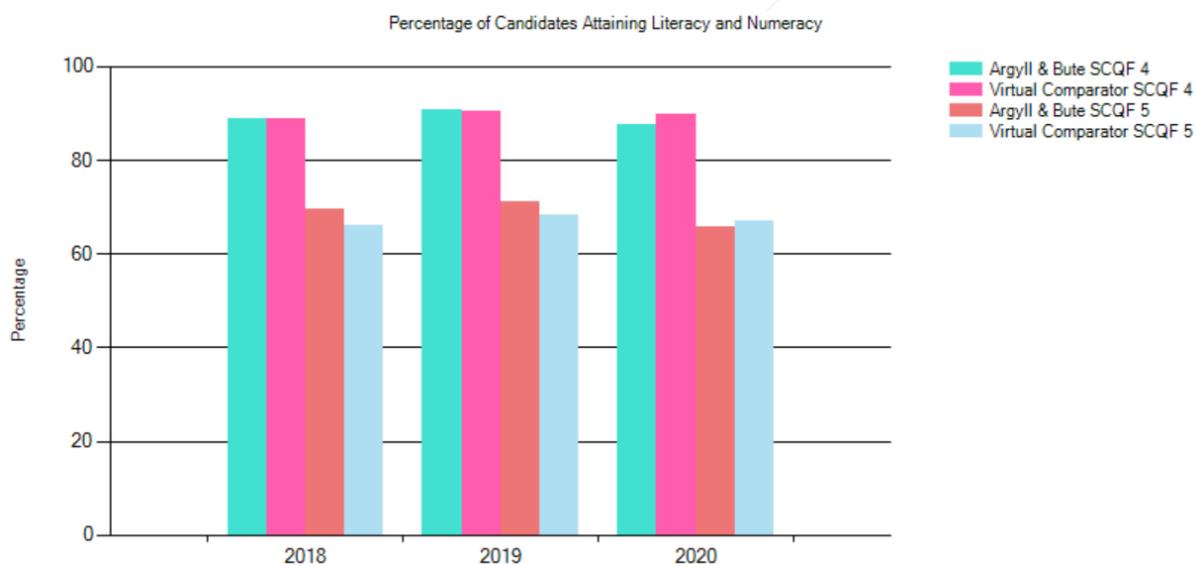
The percentage of young people in Argyll and Bute gaining numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5 are both above the Virtual Comparator.

Improving Attainment in Numeracy (S6 based on S4 roll)



The percentage of young people in Argyll and Bute gaining both literacy and numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5 are below the Virtual Comparator.

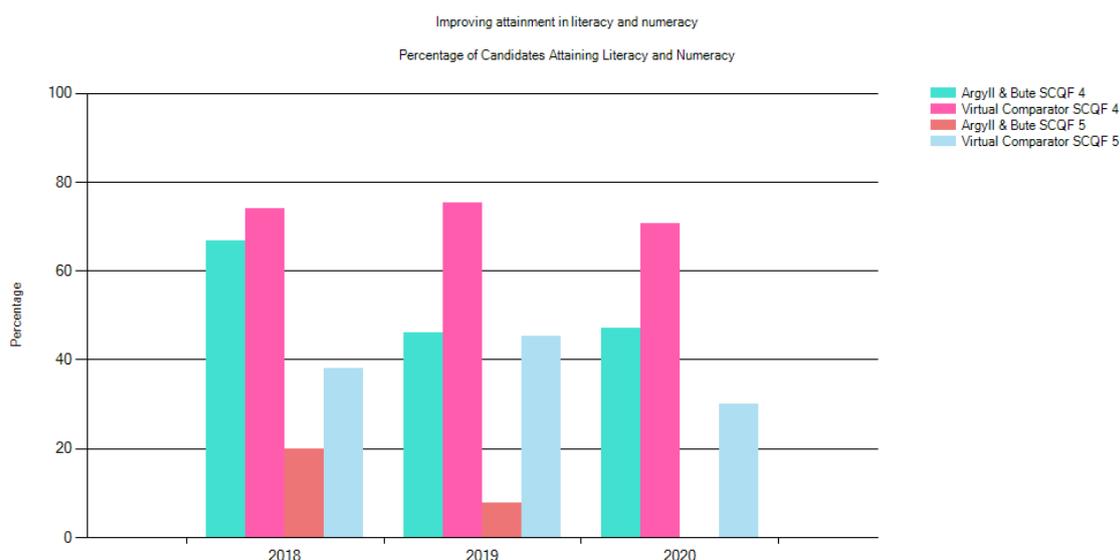
Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy (S6 based on S4 roll)



Attainment of Care Experienced Young People in Literacy and Numeracy (S4 and S5)

The graphs below demonstrate that, in 2020, the performance of S4 and S5 Looked After young people in Literacy and Numeracy was less than the Virtual Comparator. The fact that the cohort of young people is so small makes it difficult to attach significance to the trends over time noted below. Tracking and monitoring of care experienced young people at an individual level is supporting progress and positive outcomes.

S4 attainment



S5 attainment



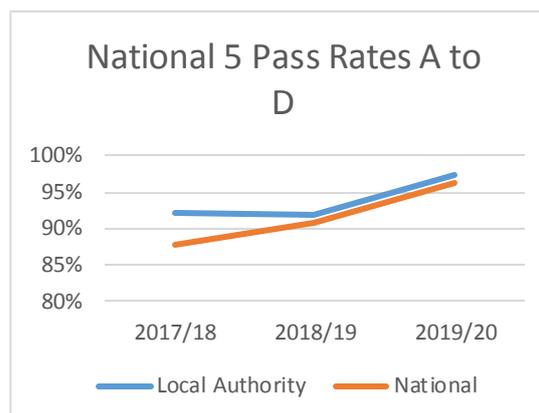
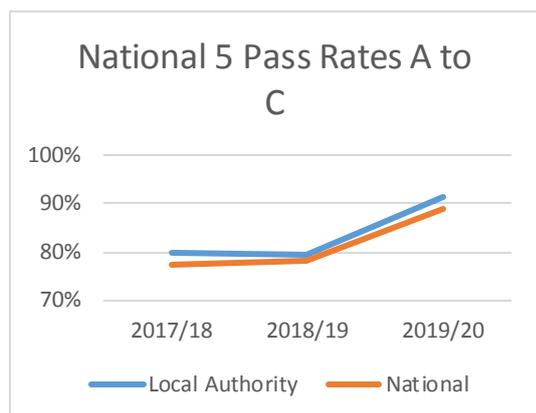
OUTCOMES IN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS – 2018-2020

Due to Covid 19, the 2020 national examination diet did not go ahead with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) developing an alternative certification model (ACM). This model asked teachers to use their professional judgement, and knowledge of pupils' work, to make an estimate of the appropriate grade and band in line with the existing awards framework. This was based on learners' demonstrated and inferred attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. For this reason this session's results should not be compared to those of previous sessions, although we continue to identify areas

of strength and areas requiring development and improvement.

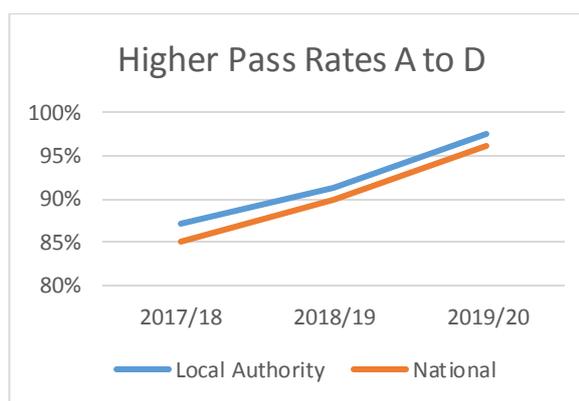
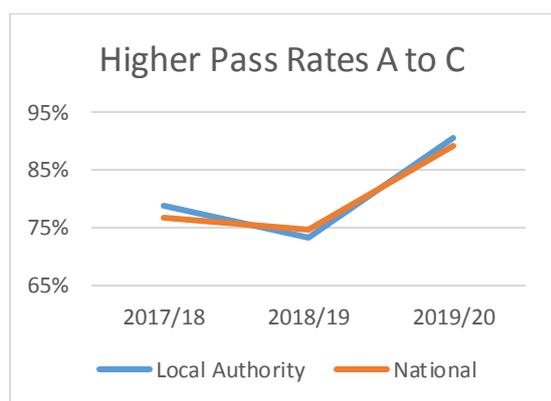
The following tables outline A-C and A-D pass rates in national 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications. Outcomes for 2020/21 will be awarded in August 2021 by the SQA. Trends are reported on both a 3-year and 5-year basis.

National 5:



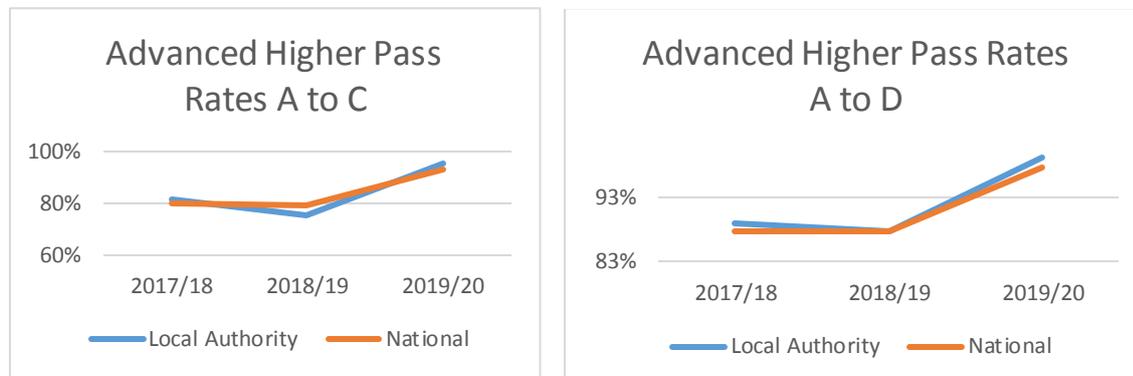
National 5 A-C and A-D pass rates in Argyll and Bute remain above the national average. This continues the trend of the past three years. This continues the trend of the past three years although caution must be exercised in analysing this data due to the implementation of an alternative certification model and the lack of comparative data from previous years.

Higher:



Higher A-C and A-D pass rates in Argyll and Bute followed a similar trend to the national results. Higher passes at A-C and A-D in Argyll and Bute increased in 2019/20 and are slightly above the national average. Again, direct comparisons cannot be drawn with previous years as a result of the alternative certification model implemented for 2020.

Advanced Higher:



Advanced Higher passes increased in 2019-20, reflecting the national trend, and in doing so, sit just above the national average figure at both A-C and A-D, again the implementation of the alternative certification model means that direct comparisons cannot be drawn with previous performance in these measures.

The OECD report on Curriculum for Excellence, published in June 2021 recommended *“adapting the pedagogical and assessment practices and the structure of learning pathways in the Senior Phase to enhance learners’ experience of upper-secondary education and help them develop CfE’s four capacities continuously.”*

The service will implement such changes once outlined in the Scottish Government Implementation Plan created in response to the OECD recommendations and due for publication in September 2021.

2. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

Professional learning on the dimensions of poverty across Argyll and Bute was offered as part of our CLPL catalogue and we continue to engage with the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) workstream on closing the poverty-related gap. Headteachers and other school-based staff have benefited from professional learning with the RIC workstream leads. Promoting Equity Week 2020, organised by the RIC and Education Scotland, saw active involvement from Headteachers and members of the central education team. Argyll and Bute has also contributed to national understanding of the challenges, especially for those living in poverty in rural areas. There is strong consensus that colleagues at all levels have improved their understanding of the challenges faced by children living in poverty. There is also a strong consensus that the Scottish Attainment Challenge has made an important contribution to this improvement. The stigma associated with poverty has reduced, and there is a strong understanding of schools' responsibility to address the attainment gap and accountability for doing so.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge 2015-20 Impact report for Argyll and Bute published in January 2020 highlights *“strong progress towards closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged learners in several measures, including attainment in literacy and numeracy in the broad general education, especially in Primary 7 and the senior phase, especially at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 4 and 6.”*

and

“Some success in narrowing the gaps between the most and least disadvantaged learners in relation to attendance, inclusion, and sustained positive destinations for school leavers.”

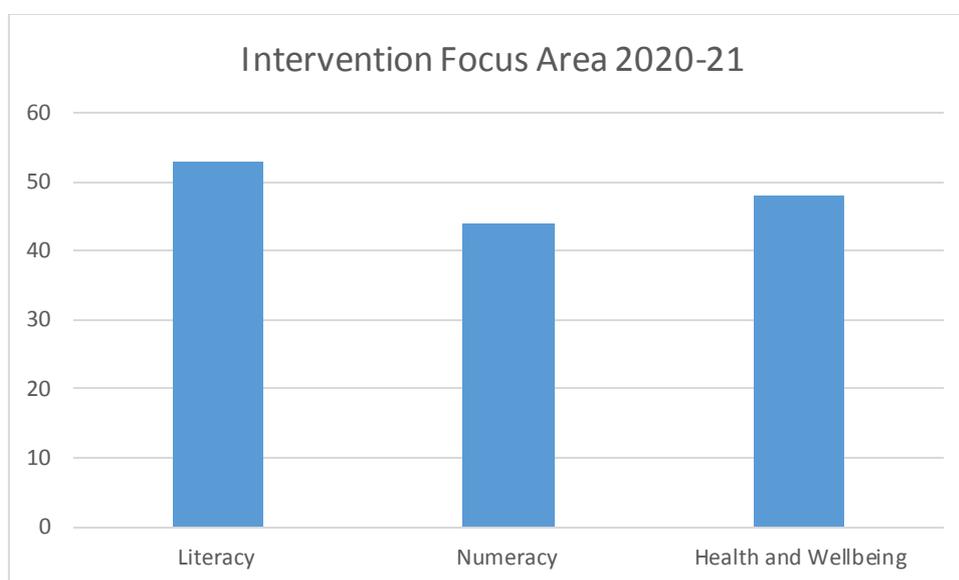
The picture of disadvantage due to poverty continues to be a complex one in Argyll and Bute. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data (2016) shows that 25% of pupils in Argyll and Bute live in the lowest SIMD deciles although we know that rural poverty is more intricate than SIMD alone. To progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap and achieve the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework (NIF), the Scottish Government has continued to provide Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) which is allocated directly to schools.

Publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools receive £1,200 for each child in Primary 1 to Secondary 3, or equivalent, who are eligible and registered for free school meals. The total funding provided directly to Head Teachers in Argyll and Bute was £1,330,813 in 2020/21, with 86% schools receiving PEF funding. Secondary Schools received £323,540 of the funding.

Session 2020-21 has been unprecedented with the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns that took place. With the onset of remote learning and economic factors brought about by the pandemic we have seen the need of families increase in our local communities. These pressures were recognised by the Scottish

Government and the PEF National Operational Guidance reflected this with a relaxing of their guidance around the spending of PEF funding. The focus remained in ensuring equity but the reality of the challenges Covid and school closures were taken into consideration. Many schools used their funding to support digital infrastructure and provide home learning resources with a focus on recovery and pupils Health and Wellbeing as schools re-opened. During quality improvement visits in session 2020/21 Education Officers discussed progress towards meeting outcomes and impact on children and young people. Outcomes were adapted as necessary to ensure a focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap and meeting the challenges of Covid.

Argyll and Bute schools identified the following areas for PEF interventions through PEF planning in 2020-21. Although Covid-19 lockdowns and remote/blended learning impacted how schools spent their PEF funding, spending was largely directed to the following areas.



The challenges posed by lockdowns due to Covid for our local families were well understood by school leaders. During the pandemic there were numerous approaches to learning including remote, blended and school hub placements. Head Teachers targeted PEF funding to support the changing needs of those families experiencing disadvantage with a focus on continued improvement of pupils' attainment.

Within literacy and numeracy schools purchased online subscriptions to support progression of skills for pupils learning at home, additional resources to support access to the right materials for learning at home and assessment packages to identify gaps in learning on the return to school. Schools utilised PEF funded staffing to support the most vulnerable pupils online, through family welfare calls and also for support within school hubs. Schools employed PEF funding to increase digital infrastructure through purchasing additional devices and connectivity solutions to ensure all families were able to access online learning and had enough devices at home for children to access learning. Digital infrastructure development was also supported by the additional Scottish Government digital equity funding.

Health and Wellbeing came to the forefront of PEF funding spends for schools not only during lockdown periods but also on the return to school buildings. Schools used PEF funding to support pupils' readiness to learn through nurture approaches which included nurture groups, staff training and nurture areas. Schools also increased opportunities for Outdoor Learning as an approach to support pupils back into school by enhancing their social and emotional wellbeing; reducing anxiety and building resilience.

Argyll and Bute's Officers and Head Teachers work closely with a number of partners including Education Scotland, Northern Alliance, Children and Families and Health to support schools in closing the attainment gap between our most and least disadvantaged children.

We have worked in collaboration with the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor to develop the offering of support to schools as well as the approach to strategically gathering data on the use and impact of PEF. Through this partnership a number of information and support sessions were available to school staff to develop the planning, measurement and evaluation of PEF. Further support was available to schools through the Argyll and Bute PEF information pack and PEF planning proforma exemplar. This coherent planning format is improving the consistency of data gathered centrally on PEF interventions and the impact of these in order for a wider sharing across establishments of what works well to close the gap.

The Education Scotland Attainment advisor reported to Head Teachers highlight messages on improvements in outcomes for children and young people from the Scottish Attainment Challenge 2015-2020 report:

We are seeing a positive impact of the interventions that PEF funding has supported since 2016. Attainment in literacy in the BGE (2016-2019) illustrates the attainment gap narrowing by 13%; and attainment in numeracy in the BGE (2016-2019) illustrating the attainment gap has narrowed by 2%.

This narrowing of the attainment gap is illustrated in the table extract shown below from the March 2021 Scottish Government Report 'Improving outcomes for young people through school education'. Argyll and Bute's young people have the smallest gap between the most deprived and least deprived school leavers achieving five or more awards at level five (2014/15 – 2018/19).

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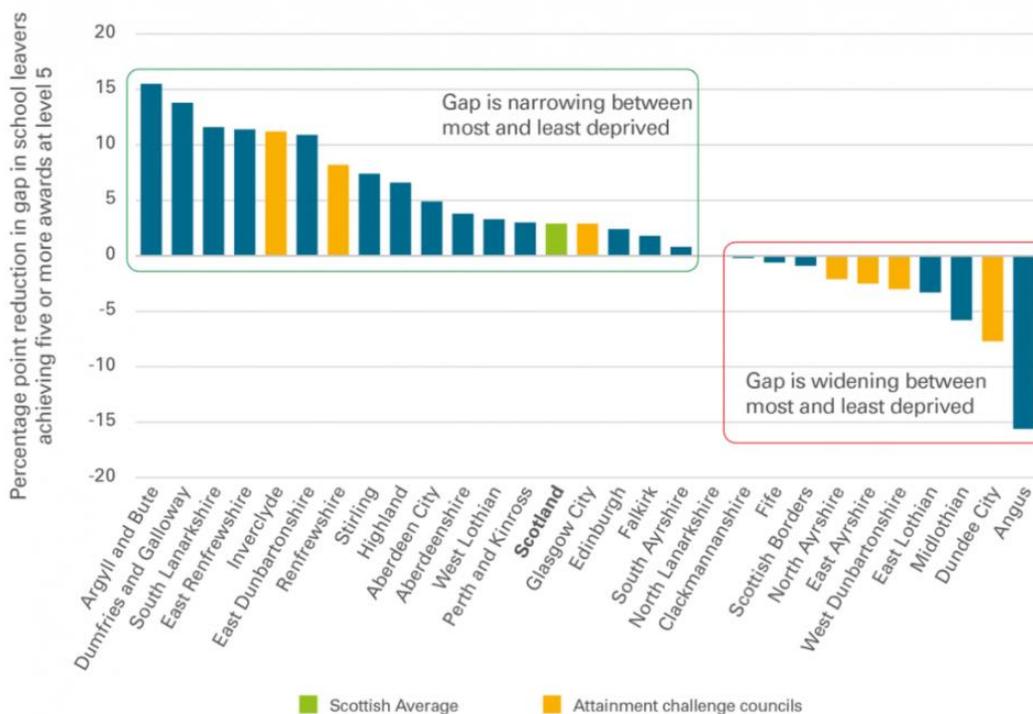
This narrowing of the attainment gap can also be seen between the most deprived and least deprived school leavers achieving five or more awards at level five (2014/15 – 2018/19) as illustrated in the table extract shown below from the March 2021 Scottish Government Report:

"Improving outcomes for young people through school education"

Exhibit D

Change in gap between most deprived and least deprived pupils in percentage of school leavers achieving five or more awards at level five, 2014/15 – 2018/19

The gap between SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived) and SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) has narrowed in most councils although it has increased in ten.



Note: Due to small numbers this analysis does not include Moray, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland.

Source: Insight Database, Scottish Government

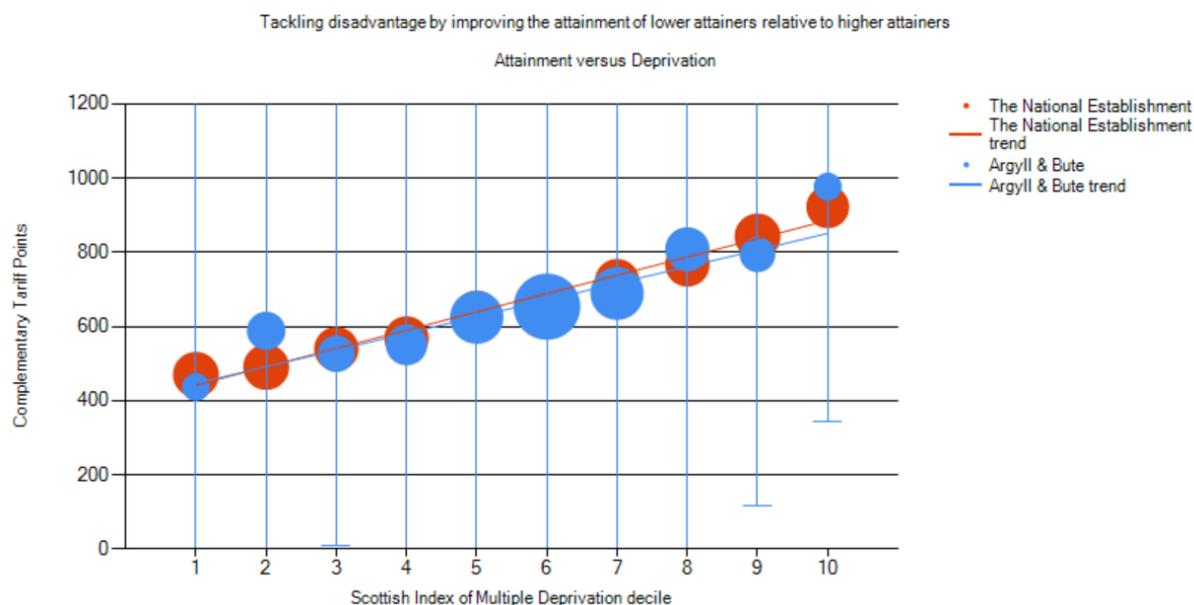
The findings in relation to our progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap show that we have taken significant steps towards our goal and that we have a sound strategic framework in place for the future.

The Central Education Team, in collaboration with key partners, will continue to support schools in their strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of PEF interventions in order to reduce the poverty related attainment gap for our children and young people experiencing disadvantage.

Attainment versus deprivation (S6 pupils based on the S4 roll)

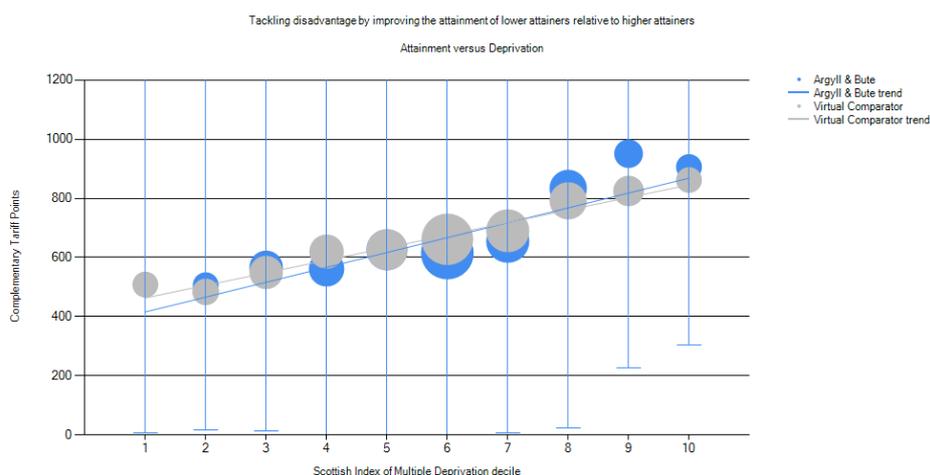
The 2020 data in the graph below shows the average tariff points (points allocated to pupil exam attainment) achieved by pupils in each of the 10 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) pupil groups in Argyll and Bute compared with the National data. Group (decile) 1 represent the most disadvantaged pupils, while decile 10 represents the least disadvantaged. Argyll and Bute candidates in SIMD decile 2 are outperforming young people nationally. In SIMD deciles 1 and 9, young people's performance in Argyll and Bute was marginally below the average national level. The overall trend in Argyll and Bute is almost identical to the national trend.

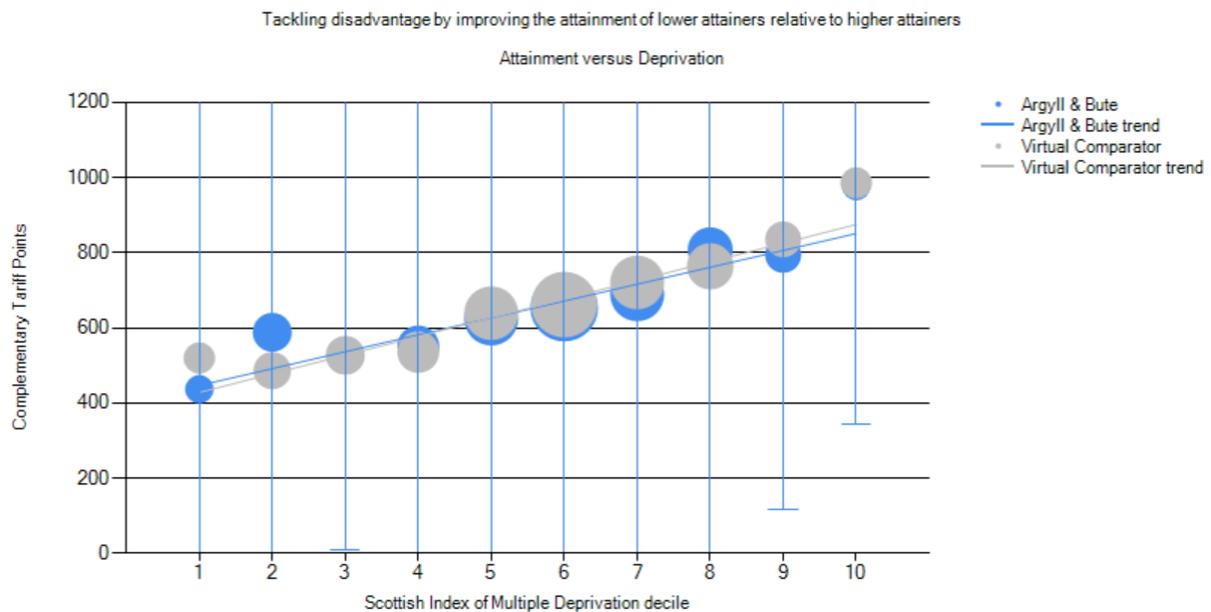
Argyll and Bute v National



The 2020 data in the graphs below shows the average tariff points achieved by pupils in each of the 10 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) cohorts in Argyll and Bute compared with the Virtual Comparator data – pupils from similar backgrounds across Scotland. Pupils in SIMD 2 and 8 are outperforming their Virtual Comparator equivalents, while pupils in SIMD 1, 7 and 9 are underperforming or only slightly underperforming compared with the Virtual Comparator.

Argyll and Bute v Virtual Comparator

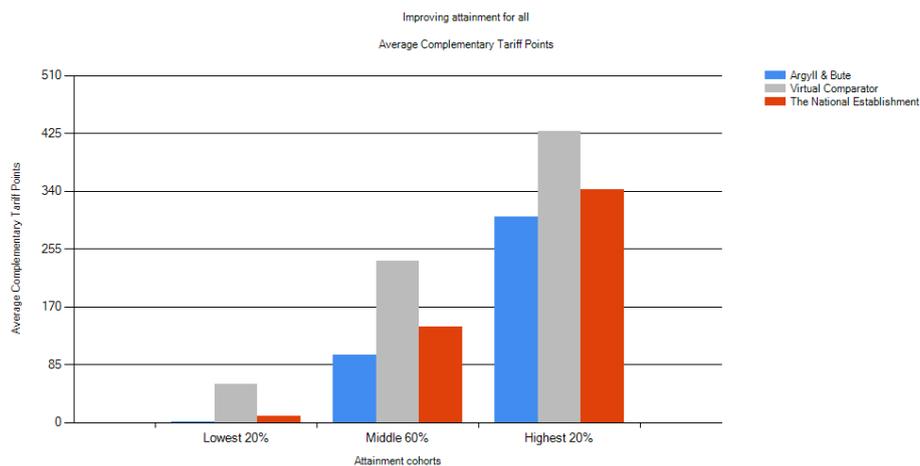




Attainment of Care Experienced Young People

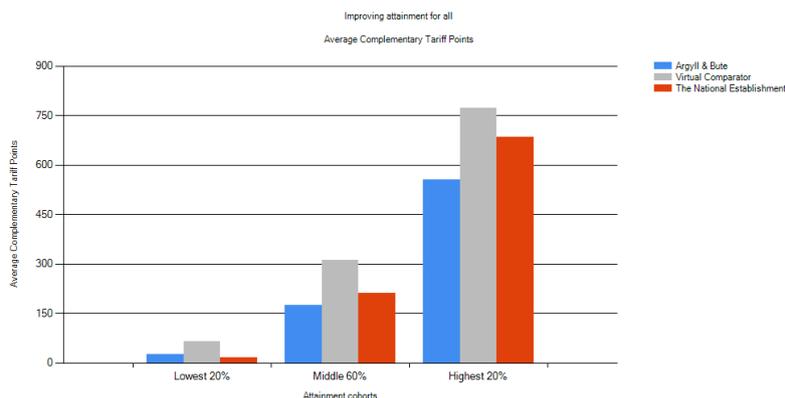
Statistically, pupils can be split into three attainment groups – the lowest attaining 20%, the highest attaining 20% and the 60% in between. The table below demonstrates that, in S4, Argyll and Bute’s Care Experienced cohort have been outperformed by both the Virtual Comparator and National Establishment. The Principal Teacher for Care Experienced Young People will work with schools to implement strategies to improve attainment for this cohort of our learners next session.

S4 attainment



S5 attainment

The table below demonstrates that, in S5, attainment of Care Experienced pupils in the bottom 20% was greater than the national average. The attainment of Argyll and Bute's Care Experienced cohort in the middle 60% and highest 20% was less than both the National Establishment and the Virtual Comparator. For all groups of Care Experienced pupils, the Virtual Comparator figure was greater than both the Argyll and Bute and the National Establishment figures and again this this will be a focused area for improvement.



As a service we identified areas for improvement within the attainment of our Care Experienced pupils and in session 2020/21 the Principal Teacher for Care Experienced Young People worked with schools to implement interventions to improve performance measures. This data has been used to identify areas of risk and focus within the 2020/21 Education Service Plan. Identified outcomes, interventions and performance measures relating to this cohort will be used to support progress appropriate to each care experienced young person.

It is anticipated that the impact of these interventions and specifically the measures undertaken within the spending plans for the Scottish Government Care Experienced Fund Grant will be visible in trends over time. The outcomes will be reviewed and adapted in line with long-term strategic planning and inform the 2021/22 iteration of the plan.

Interventions to mitigate the further impact of COVID on the poverty related attainment gap

Family Liaison Officers originally recruited to specifically support Care Experienced Young People were used during the session to also support children and families from SIMD 1-4 experiencing further hardship or trauma as a result of the pandemic. This additional intervention supported families to access additional benefits and supports and to re-engage children with learning and also attendance at school.

3. Improvements in children and young people's health and wellbeing

Significant work has been undertaken to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people across Argyll and Bute, taking in to account additional pressures arising from the circumstances of the pandemic.

The Educational Psychology Service developed an improved consistent, evidence informed approach to supporting children and young people experiencing significant difficulties with school attendance. This approach enhances the rigour around assessment of non-attendance and provides training for staff linked to intervention approaches to improve outcomes for young people disengaged from school and as a result of this work a number of children were able to reconnect with and attend school to continue face to face learning. Re-engaging children and young people with attendance difficulties will be a key priority for the Service in 2021-22.

Scottish Government guidance on safe opening of schools led to a need to create a working group to consider all aspects of transitions, to ensure effective transitions for all learners with a particular focus on enhancing wellbeing. The group developed guidance for staff and learners supporting transition back to establishments after periods of remote learning as well as supporting transitions into ELC, into primary and into secondary school. This work ensured that all eligible children had a quality transition experience appropriate to the local context that met their needs whilst following Scottish Government Guidance. The Equality and Inclusion team worked with the Psychological Services team to ensure new guidance and support was in place for children and young people that need a phased return to school after lockdown, this work was particularly successful and supported a number of children to return who may otherwise have become non-attenders.

There has been a strong emphasis on identifying the most vulnerable children and young people across the authority. The additional vulnerability risk assessment has been a key multi-agency tool in establishing a consistent threshold and ensuring those that need support can access it. The Education Psychological and Inclusion and Equality team continued to provide robust support during this lockdown period to children, young people and their families and education establishments.

In collaboration with partners the service implemented an effective nurture and relationships strategy across educational establishments with an associated sustainable training and coach consult model, based on assessment of need. "Our Children, Their Nurturing Education" (OCTNE) was officially launched in January 2021, with 20 schools across primary and secondary beginning their journey to become a nurture and relationships based community. Each establishment is developing a bespoke plan which includes evaluation using the Model for Improvement to measure outcomes for children and young people. This work was recognised in the Scottish Attainment Challenge 2015-20 impact report for Argyll and Bute which stated:

"A strategic and collaborative approach to a culture of nurture to support children and young people affected by trauma, including (but not only) in the context of COVID-19. This approach includes a programme to train all Children's Services staff in trauma-

aware practices. The CECYP officer has worked very effectively with the Educational Psychology service to bring about cultural change in this context. This programme is leading to tangible improvements for many vulnerable young people.”

The school counselling service is in place and providing positive support targeted at pupils across upper primary and secondary. Since the service began in February of this year over 100 referrals have been received with the average age of the young person being 14 years. Early indications are that young people with particular vulnerabilities, such as having additional support needs, being care experienced or being a young carer, are supported to access the service. Analysis of trends to date has identified that the service is being used well across all areas of the authority ensuring equity of access. The Educational Psychology Service including the research assistant are working with the team to ensure robust evaluation of process and outcomes.

Our schools and ELCs have continued to use targeted approaches to Social and Emotional wellbeing, including nurture, PATHS, Emotion Works and trauma informed practice to support children’s wellbeing through what has been an unprecedented year

Weekly meetings were been established between Head of Service, Principal Educational Psychologist and senior managers in the Health and Social Care Partnership to consider multi-agency strategic approaches to identifying and addressing the needs of vulnerable children. As a result, clear action has been taken on issues arising from partnership meetings, including re-engagement with third sector partners to work in collaboration with Education and HSCP staff to provide support for young people with severe and complex needs and their families.

We successfully instigated a coordinated and coherent approach in our response to supporting the identified needs of communities, both across our own Education Team and partners, and through engagement with the Northern Alliance, the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP) and the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES). The Parent and Carer Helpline was particularly effective at the height of the pandemic in supporting parents and families, and information on mental health and wellbeing was been collated by the EPS and circulated to all secondary age young people and their parents/carers.

To ensure our staff were well equipped to cope and support our learners, we prioritised the wellbeing of all our staff. Trauma training modules were made available and were publicised on our resource Hub and senior leaders within education were offered access to coaching support, the feedback from which has been very positive and this coaching will be continued next session.

In session 21/22 we will seek to continue to deepen the existing effective multi-agency approaches to supporting vulnerable young people and their families.

4. Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

The 2020 Argyll and Bute Annual Participation Measure indicates a 0.7% decrease to 94.1% of 16 to 19 year olds in Argyll and Bute participating in education, employment and training compared to 92.1% nationally. Despite a fall of 0.7% (equivalent to 22 young people,) in the number of young people participating last year, Argyll and Bute remains above the Scottish average in all three classifications and is ranked 9th in Scotland for participation across all local authorities.

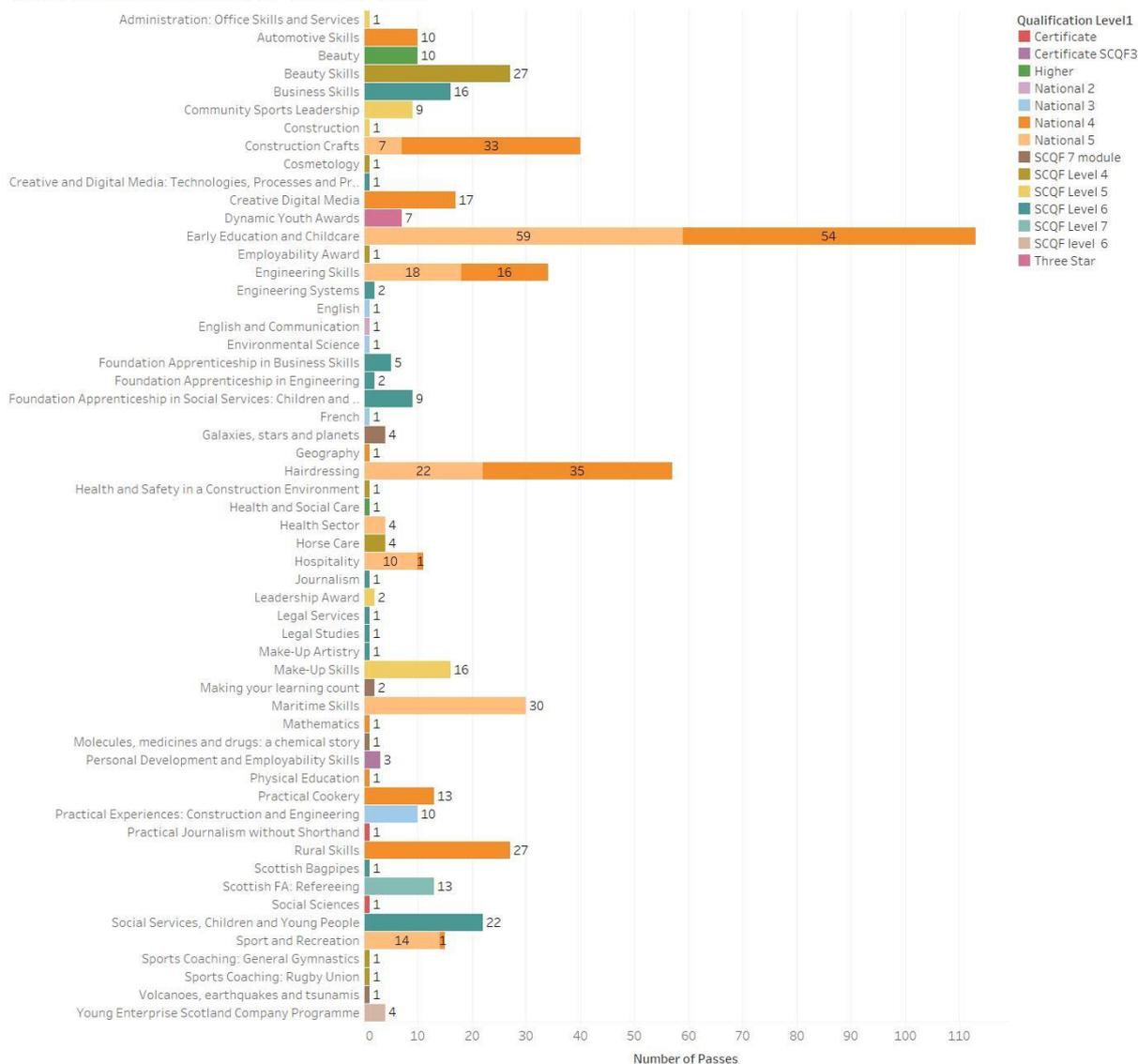
	2016 Argyll and Bute	2017 Argyll and Bute	2018 Argyll and Bute	2019 Argyll and Bute	2020 Argyll and Bute	2020 Scotland
Participating	94.2%	93%	94.2%	94.8%	94.1% (-0.7)	92.1% (+0.5)
Not Participating	3.1%	2.8%	2.7%	2.2%	2.4% (+0.2%)	2.8% (-0.3)
Unconfirmed	2.7%	4.2%	3.1%	3.0%	3.5% (+0.5%)	5.1% (-0.2)

There was an increase in the number of young people in post-school employment from 21.9% in 2019 to 22.6% in 2020. The overall drop in participation numbers among young people who have left school is largely due to a fall in the numbers involved in Further or Higher Education, from 71.6 in 2019 to 70.3 in 2020 and this may have been a consequence of the pandemic.

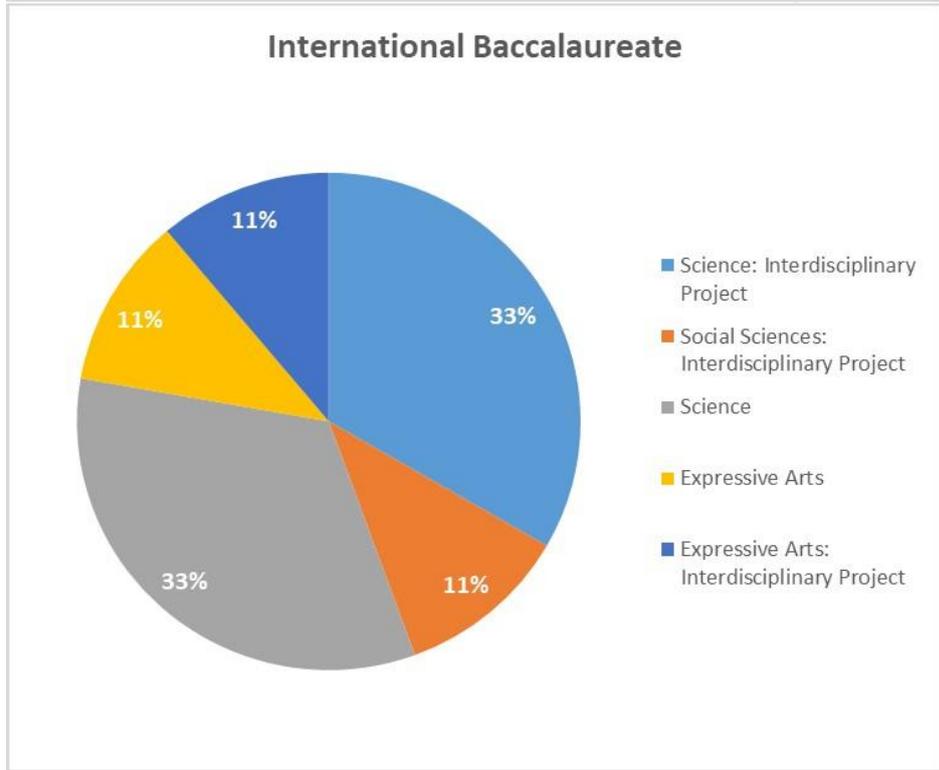
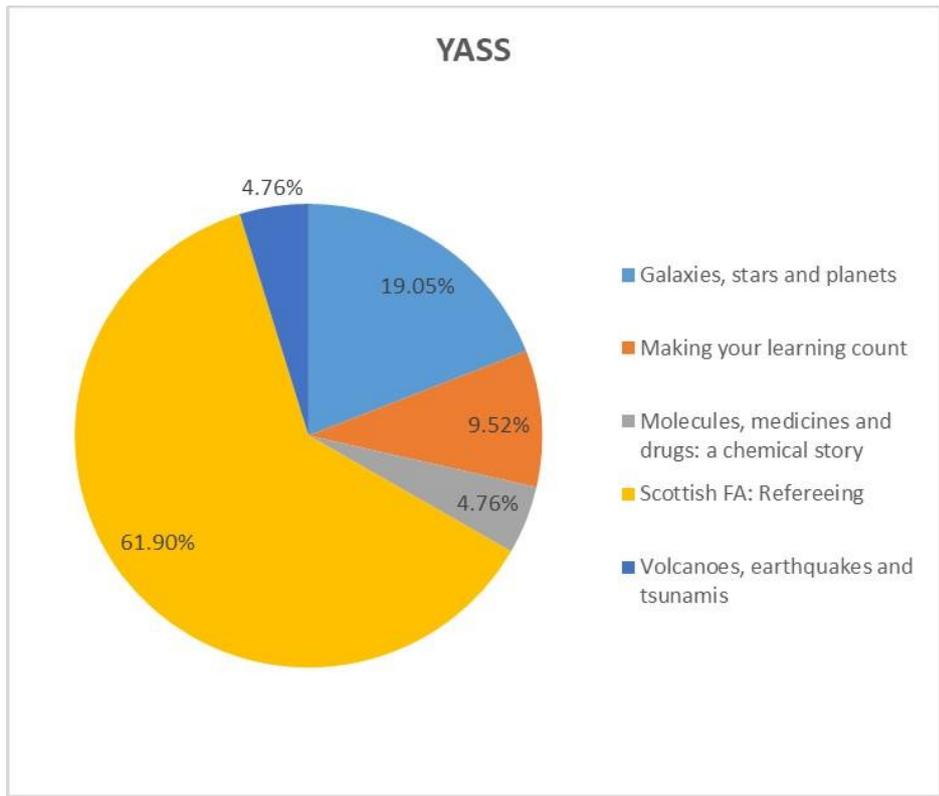
The achievement of children and young people across Argyll and Bute Council reflects a broad range of national and award-bearing wider achievement qualifications. Schools have worked well to develop a wide range of learning pathways for young people which enables them to achieve a broad range of skills. COVID-19 and lockdown presented considerable challenges for the delivery of vocational and work based provision and placements. Throughout the pandemic the service has been innovative in responding and has continued to offer courses online and hold virtual STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), careers and employer events.

The COVID-19 restrictions reduced the opportunities for young people in Argyll and Bute to participate in and gain awards in wider achievement activities. Nonetheless, many young people did manage to complete awards. The wide range of awards passed across our secondary schools and in partnership with local colleges during 2019/20 included:

Wider Achievement Awards - Passed - 2020

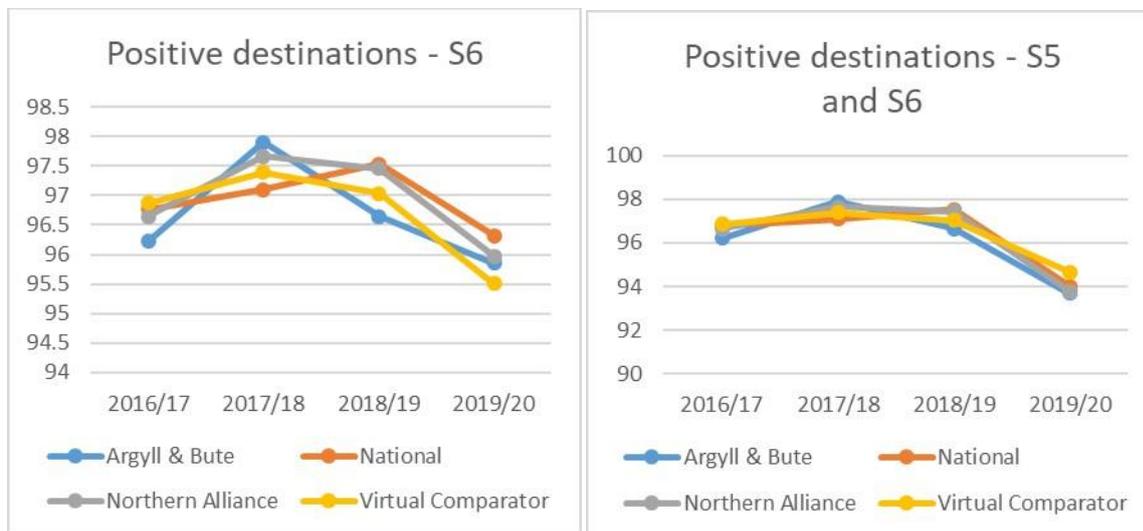


In addition, a number of sixth year students accessed qualifications at national 7 level offered by the Open University Young Applicants Scotland Scheme (YASS), the International Baccalaureate award and degree level modules. Further information is shown in the following tables:

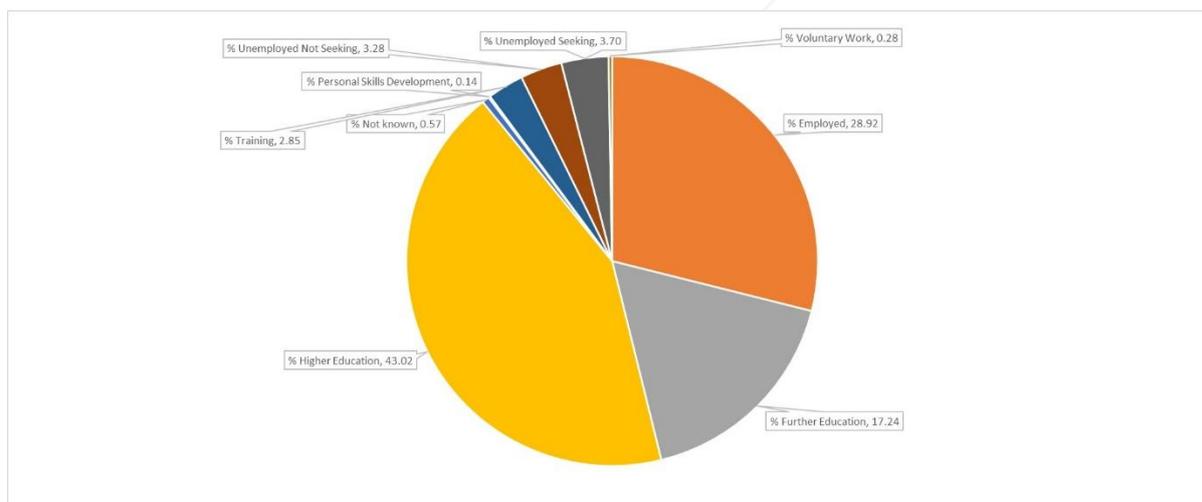


A high number of young people enhanced their achievement portfolio last session and this has contributed well to securing positive, sustained destinations for young people when they leave school. Our evidence tells us that we are achieving year on year improvements in positive destinations for the majority of school leavers in Argyll and Bute. However, as was the case with young people nationally and in the northern

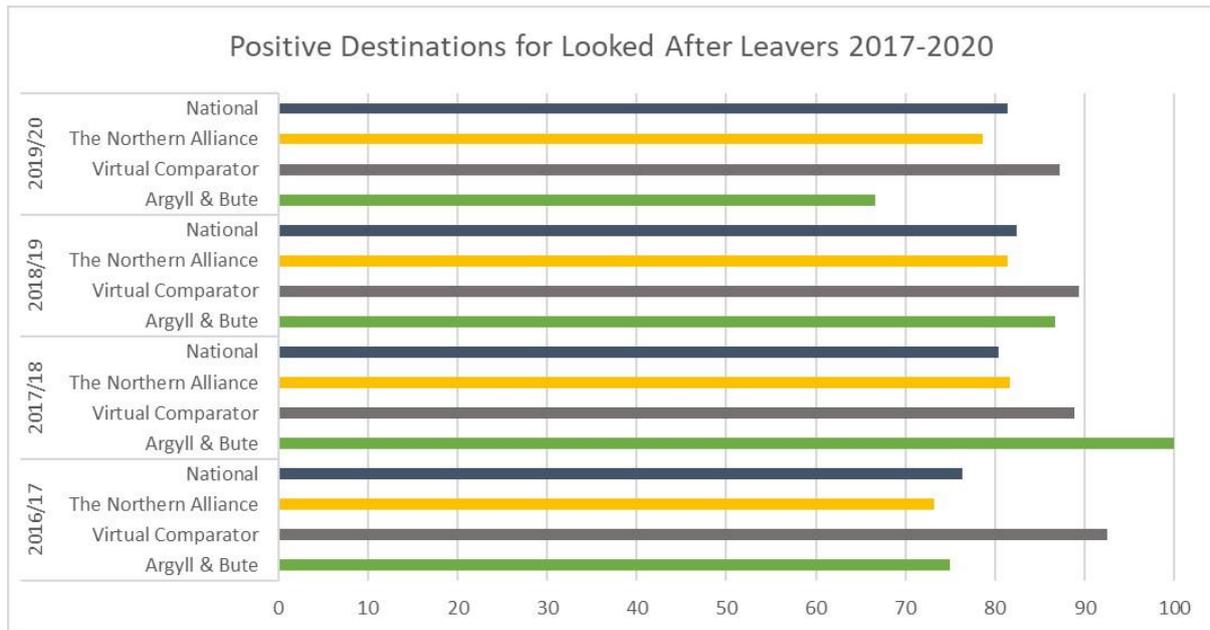
region of Scotland (The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative), there has been a slight reduction in young people achieving a positive destination post-school, from 95% in 2018-19 to 92% in 2019-20. Again, the situation relating to the pandemic explains the reduced figures in Argyll and Bute and across the country.



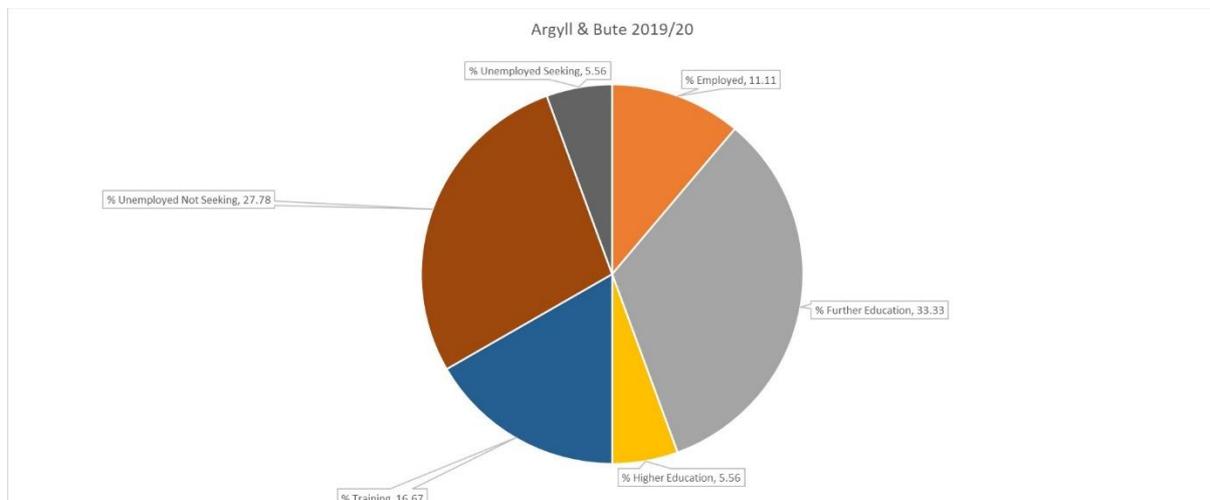
The breakdown of destinations is shown below:



67% of our care-experienced young people who left education in 2020 secured a positive and sustained post school destination, as described in the table below. The cause for the reduction in positive destinations among care-experienced young people is the rise in unemployment, for which COVID-19 is partly responsible. The second graph shows the breakdown of post-school destinations for care-experienced school leavers. As a post-school destination, unemployment for this group of young people rose from 13.3 % in 2018-19 to 33.3% in 2019-20. Addressing this issue is a key element of our work with care-experienced young people as we move into session 2021 -22.



The breakdown of destinations for care-experienced young people is shown below:



Our practitioner led Developing Young Workforce (DYW) working group has been active in sharing information and examples of good practice across the authority. An audit of school and employer partnerships, found that all secondary schools are engaged in good quality partnerships with employers, predominantly falling into the “collaboration” category. Good progress has been made in developing links with the DYW Regional Board including a joint event involving school DYW representatives and employers. A positive impact of this event has been that sector understanding has improved and further joint work has been identified on rural skills and developing online employer-led sector inputs.

Continuing School-College partnerships have enabled us to offer a range of work-

based learning opportunities including a number of SCQF Level 3/4/5/6 Skills for Work courses, NPA SCQF Level 4/5 courses and options to study single units from full-time courses. To support young people in developing industry experience, the range of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) and number of young people participating has increased. FAs were delivered in Business Skills, Engineering, Social Services and Healthcare and Social Services Children and Young People.

Work Placements and Flexible Learning Plans were effectively brought to a halt by Covid-19 and lockdown. The variation in pupil numbers and rurality of many schools in Argyll and Bute means that different models are utilised by schools to offer work placements. Under normal circumstances it would be expected that all pupils will have participated on a work placement by the end of Senior Phase. Schools adapted well to Covid-19 constraints with several offering DYW activities online including online open days and virtual UCAS University and College showcase events.

SECTION SIX: OUR CHILDREN, THEIR FUTURE – SELF-EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

Section 6.1 of the Annual Plan and Progress Report look specifically at the six Key Objectives at the heart of Argyll and Bute's vision for education – *Our Children, Their Future*. After an explanation of each Key Objective and its significance, the evidence of progress and improvement which has emerged from our self-evaluation is summarised. Section 6.2 outlines our improvement priorities for Session 2021-22.

KEY OBJECTIVE 1:	RAISE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL
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What is this?

The quality of education offered by each school in Argyll and Bute and how effective we are in raising educational attainment and achievement for all children and young people.

Why is this important?

The curriculum includes a broad range of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, to help every child and young person to develop knowledge, skills and attributes for success in learning, life and work. Research and evidence consistently demonstrates the direct link between poverty and deprivation and lower attainment and achievement. A key driver of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) is to reduce inequalities in educational outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.

Within Argyll and Bute Education Service we will raise educational attainment and achievement for all through the following agreed **priority actions**:

- Improve the overall quality of learning experiences;
- Tackle disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap;
- Improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people, and
- Continually improve curriculum design and development.

What our improvement evidence for 2020-21 is telling us:

Priority Action 1 - Improve the overall quality of learning experiences

Through our virtual quality improvement visits and response to feedback from HMle and Care Inspectorate inspection visits, we have supported schools' and centres' improvement in effective self-evaluation, resulting in improved provision to and outcomes for our children and young people.

We have worked collaboratively with education establishments, challenging and supporting them to evaluate and improve learning experiences for children and young people. Across Argyll and Bute schools, a total of 41 colleagues in 21 primary and six secondary schools have completed training to become facilitators of our Guided

Approaches to Pedagogical Enquiry (GAPE) programme modules, resulting in improved delivery of high quality learning teaching and assessment across the curriculum which engages pupils with their own learning.

Central Officers are now represented on Northern Alliance (NA) workstreams, collaborating to ensure the relevance of regional CLPL (Career Long Professional Learning) provision to Argyll and Bute establishments. During lockdown training and professional learning was delivered digitally, and the impact upon attainment will be monitored and evaluated next session.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) sustained a breadth of service delivery through the highly effective use of technology, ensuring that our most vulnerable service users and their families were supported during lockdown periods. This is of particular importance as we look to focus on the mental and emotional wellbeing of our children and young people.

A pilot project was undertaken within Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to gather feedback ahead of the launch of the refreshed Learning and Development Framework. Feedback was positive and next session will see the now fully digital resource implemented across the local authority, promoting collaboration within and across settings, enabling instant access to high quality training materials and ensuring national and local ELC guidance is readily accessible to all. This will facilitate improvements in the progress made by the children working at Early Level within our establishments.

Within Gaelic Medium Education, a variety of digital technology was utilised to support a collegiate approach for Gaelic learners at all levels to sharing resources. This development has increased equity of provision across the local authority by ensuring access to learning regardless of place or context, whilst strengthening learner networks within Gaelic medium education.

We have completed suitability surveys of all educational establishments. As a result, we are finalising our Learning Estates Strategy which over time will ensure learning environments continue to enable high quality educational provision for all pupils which enhance their experience of learning within Argyll and Bute.

Priority Action 2 - Improve our approach to tackling disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap:

All schools were offered ongoing support in relation to Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) planning and evaluation throughout the 2020-2021 school session and a refreshed Pupil Equity Information Pack was released to support the development of PEF planning for session 2021-2022. As a result, Head Teachers and their teams are more confident in planning PEF spending to narrow the poverty-related attainment gap.

Throughout the year, we provided all schools with information on examples of good practice relating to PEF, participatory budgeting and Cost of the School Day initiatives to help parents and partners engage in our work to reduce the impact of poverty on our children and young people.

We worked collaboratively with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor to evaluate and refresh our audit tool to gather robust data on PEF interventions. This tool will ensure that successful interventions can be shared more widely thus benefitting a greater number of learners and continuing our work to close the poverty-related attainment gap within Argyll and Bute.

Session 2020-21 also entailed ongoing, close collaboration with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor to support the publication of our five year Scottish Attainment Challenge Impact Report. The findings in relation to our progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap show that we have taken significant steps towards our goal and that we have a sound strategic framework in place for the future. The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) increased its contact with school communities, ensuring staff within educational establishments and parents/carers have a sound understanding of challenges and barriers to learning for vulnerable groups of children and young people, particularly relating to mental health and wellbeing. For example, we used our GLOW blog to enable education staff, parents/carers and partners to access our online mental health resource which relates to our authority strategy: *Our Children, Their Mental Health*

The EPS has further enhanced approaches to supporting children and young people experiencing loss, change and bereavement through Seasons for Growth, via the delivery of Companion training in a growing number of establishments across Argyll and Bute. Support networks have also been established for trained Companions. This has allowed greater numbers of children and young people to benefit from this support within their local community where a need for intervention has been identified.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has supported the development of a greater understanding of the needs of vulnerable individuals and groups of children and young people who are less visible through the tracking, monitoring and data gathering within the authority, particularly LGBTQ+, Gypsy/Travellers and those who are in informal care arrangements. Links have been made with local LGBTQ+ networks and training has been provided to the EPS team to inform service delivery moving forward.

In addition, we have now developed a more consistent, evidence-informed approach to supporting children and young people experiencing significant difficulties with school attendance. This approach enhances the rigour around the assessment and understanding of non-attendance and provides training for staff linked to intervention approaches to improve outcomes for young people disengaged from school.

To ensure effective transitions for all learners, the COVID Recovery Work Stream produced new guidance to support effective transitions for learners, enhancing wellbeing and ensuring our children and young people are supported with change, particularly during the period following lockdown.

Priority Action 3 - Improve our approach to improving Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing:

There has been a significant engagement by our schools with Northern Alliance Literacy and Numeracy workstreams on relevant, planned, professional learning over this session (161 collaborative engagements). 81% of participants reported an increased level of professional understanding and 77% reported this provided an opportunity for new collaborative working. The impact of this sees an improvement to the quality and variety of teaching methods employed across our establishments, leading to improved outcomes for learners within these core areas of the curriculum.

Within ELC settings, we have developed materials to track and monitor the development of core literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, all settings across the authority are now tracking individual learners' progress, supporting greater fluidity of progression through the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence. This data will support transition and the delivery of learning in P1 which meets children's requirements in terms of progression, pace and challenge.

A Gaelic specific project for P7 pupils who are transitioning into S1 has been successfully implemented, focusing jointly upon pastoral and curricular progression which ensures that the planned learning for these pupils meets their needs and abilities in relation to oral literacy.

Within Gaelic Medium educational provision, progressive literacy planning documents encompassing, Early, 1st and 2nd Level, were created and implemented in session 2020-21. The impact of this work will ensure that the teaching of literacy within Gaelic Medium education is more comprehensive, ensuring breadth, depth and coherence in terms of the knowledge and skills required by learners.

We have strengthened our tracking and monitoring processes. As a result, teachers have an improved understanding of our young people's progress in Literacy and Numeracy and are better able to plan the next steps in learning to ensure all pupils are accessing the appropriate support to target the specific areas in which they require improvement.

The Educational Psychology Service, in collaboration with partners, implemented an effective nurture and relationships strategy across educational establishments with an associated sustainable training and coach-consult model, based on assessment of need. "Our Children, Their Nurturing Education" (OCTNE) was officially launched in January 2021, with 20 schools across primary and secondary beginning their journey to become a nurture and relationships based community. Each establishment is now developing a bespoke plan to include evaluation, using the Model for Improvement, to measure outcomes for children and young people in relation to this key area. This approach is enhancing the quality of relationships being developed with our most vulnerable learners, leading to interventions which focus on responding to a child's life experiences as opposed to their behaviour in specific circumstances. This piece of work also facilitates the development of key skills within our young people who benefit from interactions with adults who support them to build their capacity for resilience and to develop their own emotional intelligence.

The Educational Psychology Service maintained its focus on developing a Trauma-Responsive workforce with over 90% of teaching and support staff across all establishments completing the training modules at an appropriate level. Over 80% of all staff working within educational establishments have now completed this training. Further sessions at Trauma-Skilled level, aimed at Named Persons and Lead Professionals, have been successfully delivered. With support from the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) team from Education Scotland, the trauma strategy has been analysed to identify tests of change, ensuring training is making a difference to practice. Core areas for scrutiny are our nurturing schools and Care Assessment and Reviewing Officer (CARO) led planning meetings for care-experienced children and young people.

The School Counselling service is now in place and progressing positively. Since the service was established in February of this year over 100 referrals have been received with the average age of the young person being 14 years. Analysis of trends to date has identified that the service is being utilised well across all areas of the authority, ensuring equity of access.

We have evaluated the tracking and monitoring of our care-experienced children and young people and the resulting interventions taken to improve outcomes. As a result, care-experienced children's attainment and outcomes are appropriately targeted in our improvement planning. We have maintained a low number of exclusions of our care-experienced children and young people across the local authority and continue to work with our establishments to find appropriate interventions for those whose behaviour or progress may require enhanced support.

Priority Action 4 - Improve our approach to continually improve curriculum design and development:

School self-evaluation and quality assurance actions ensured high-quality learning and teaching was sustained throughout school closure. Effective practice in the use of digital learning has been identified across our establishments, with schools demonstrating their innovative approaches to collaboration and consultation with parents/carers and partners during periods of lockdown and remote learning delivery. This has ensured that our schools and ELCs are able to evidence progress during the session and target areas for improvement effectively.

Self-evaluation was further supported through three virtual quality assurance visits by the Education Central Team during the session. Such use of digital platforms has proven effective in terms of reduction in travel time and flexibility of access, and aspects of this model may be adopted within the next session to ensure efficient and impactful support to all establishments across Argyll and Bute.

Through the Progress and Achievement application, and the engagement of Education Officers with Head teachers and staff through virtual platforms, we have ensured the use of ongoing assessment data informs the planning and provision of learning and teaching, and curriculum review and development, in most establishments.

Staff in all our ELC settings and all funded ELC Childminders completed training on the Argyll and Bute 'Three Assets' approach to curriculum delivery. As a result, each setting has the capacity to develop further their curriculum in line with our aspiration to make full use of our rich outdoor environment, our culture and our partnerships.



KEY OBJECTIVE 2:	USE PERFORMANCE INFORMATION TO SECURE IMPROVEMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
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What is this?

This means effectively utilising all of the information and data we need to develop an accurate understanding of how well education for our children and young people is improving. As no single measure provides a full overview of performance, we will gather together and analyse a broad range of data collected from each of the other Key Objectives of *Our Children Their Future* to assist us in developing a comprehensive overview of the progress being made by all children and young people.

Why is this important?

Education Services gather, analyse and report on a wide range of performance information which allows us to deliver services effectively and demonstrate that we are continually improving outcomes for children and young people. For example, we use information about the progress of our children and young people to inform the approaches to learning and teaching in the classroom as well as to plan a range of supportive interventions where required.. It is everyone's responsibility to gather and use performance information to intervene to secure improvement for both individual children and groups. We will actively engage parents and young people in this process and ensure that their views are central to developments which affect them.

Within Argyll and Bute's Education Service, we will use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people through our **priority actions**:

- Effectively assess, track and monitor the progress of our children and young people;
- Implement strong self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement planning, and
- Clearly report outcomes.

What our improvement evidence for 2020-21 is telling us:**Priority Action 1 – Effectively assess, track and monitor the progress of our children and young people:**

In response to the Scottish Qualifications Authority's 'Alternative Certification Model' (ACM), we have effectively supported schools to assess and track pupil attainment in the absence of formal examinations, and to moderate assessments to ensure consistency in the standards being applied. As a result, young people have been awarded provisional results which reflect their capabilities and potential, and staff confidence in implementing ongoing assessment has increased.

We have embedded the Progress and Achievement Application across all establishments to measure Literacy and Numeracy attainment and progress. Assessment Level Progress measures (ALPs) which demonstrate progress within each level, are now well established and used with increasing confidence across all establishments. The resultant data has been utilised in all schools to support planning for learning and progression and has increased confidence in the validity of teacher professional judgements both locally and nationally in Achievement of

Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data.

Education Officers have been trained in the use of the Progress and Achievement application to challenge and support schools' use of data during quality improvement visits. Through the Progress and Achievement application, and the engagement of Education Officers with Head Teachers and staff, we have ensured that the planning and provision of learning and teaching in all establishments is robust and based on data and intelligence.

We have also improved our capacity to track attainment by extending the scope of the Progress and Achievement data sets supplied to schools. As a result, schools are better able to measure attainment and progress over time which enhances their ability to plan improvement priorities which are evidence-based.

We have provided training and support for class teachers and middle leaders on data analysis to support data confidence and data literacy in order to ensure that a robust level of evaluation is embedded across establishments.

We have raised awareness of the Broad General Education (BGE) Benchmarking Toolkit during our data training, identifying purpose and potential to contribute to comparison and collaboration between schools on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.

We have introduced a new digital moderation platform for BGE, initially with some small schools across Argyll and Bute (under 15 pupils). Five schools engaged with this platform in May 2021 to moderate pupil work and engage in professional discussion. The impact has been increased teacher confidence in their own judgements and a shared understanding of standards which enhances the rigour of teacher professional judgement.

We have supported all ELC settings to understand, assess, record and track Developmental Milestone data to maintain progress over time. Of those assessed in December 2020, 42% had achieved the appropriate Developmental Milestones, with the pandemic and associated disruption to face to face learning having an impact. Since a return to face-to-face learning in ELC settings the service is on track with achieving its target of 78% for June 2021.

Within Gaelic Secondary Education, several sharing of standards verification exercises including verification of candidate evidence for all levels of GLE and GME have been undertaken by all schools providing Gaelic Education within Argyll and Bute. The impact has been to build confidence in teacher judgement and to build curriculum links across schools within and across local authority boundaries.

Priority Action 2 – Implement strong self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement planning:

We have ensured that school improvement planning is informed by and linked closely to Our Children, Their Future and Scottish Government advice and guidance to support schools as they recover, renew and improve following the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The recently reviewed School Improvement Planning process delivers excellent coherence between individual establishment plans and the local and national

contexts and Head Teacher feedback is positive in terms of format, content and ease of use for teams of staff working all across the local authority area.

Support and training in School Improvement Planning has been delivered in session 2020-21 to further enhance the quality and robustness of these documents and stress their role as drivers for improvement. School Improvement Plans and Standards and Quality Reports have been rigorously quality assured resulting in confidence in establishments' self-evaluation and their use of data to identify relevant and focused priorities which are measured and evaluated throughout the session.

Although HMIE and Care Inspectorate inspection activity has been suspended during the pandemic, those establishments inspected beforehand continue to demonstrate their capacity to respond positively to inspection findings despite the challenges of Covid-19. In session 2020-2021, Early Years settings and schools continued to be supported by Link Education Officers and an Education Officer with a specific remit for school performance and improvement, resulting in a clearer focus on quality of provision from the education service and across our establishments.

Through a planned programme of virtual quality assurance visits, Education Officers made effective use of a range of resources and evidence, including data sets available through Progress and Achievement, to challenge and support schools and drive improvements in both the experience of and outcomes for our children and young people.

The introduction to the School Improvement Planning template of a Gaelic-specific section has allowed schools providing Gaelic Medium education to plan strategically around unique Gaelic priorities. Such schools have indicated the benefit of the introduction of this planning tool, and the initiative has been shared nationally via the Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) reviewed and updated approaches to seeking the views of children and young people, parents / carers, educational establishments and partners via analysis of approaches used across Scotland to explore best practice around wellbeing and health. As a result, specific questionnaires have been developed and circulated to seek views in relation to core service issues including mental health needs and remote delivery of support-based services. Information from these questionnaires will be made available on the service GLOW blog, taking a 'you said, we did' approach in order to evidence the steps taken to address the needs of our key stakeholders.

Priority Action 3 – Improve our approach to clearly reporting outcomes:

Schools are working effectively in partnership with parents/carers, through the use of digital platforms, to share key information about children and young people's progress, achievement and wellbeing. Effective digital channels are now in place in all schools to allow parents to convey their views on how the school communicates with them about their children.

The knowledge, understanding and expertise of Central Officers and Head Teachers are being effectively harnessed to inform the reporting of outcomes to elected members and the Scottish Government, particularly around the impact of the

pandemic on vulnerable children, young people and their families. The authority's reporting to the Scottish Government on performance across Education is underpinned by rigorous quality assurance of communicated data.

We have built on the implementation of the Progress and Achievement application to ensure continued improvement in the quality of reporting to parents within our secondary schools. Training has been delivered to all relevant teaching staff to ensure accurate and consistent use of this application.

We continue to refine our approaches to reporting performance data to our elected members within the corporate governance framework.



KEY OBJECTIVE 3:	ENSURE CHILDREN HAVE THE BEST START IN LIFE AND ARE READY TO SUCCEED
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What is this?

In Argyll and Bute, we work together to ensure children and young people experience a positive start that supports and nurtures and which builds firm foundations for later life, leading to more positive outcomes and increased opportunities for success.

Why is this important?

We know that children develop faster in the first few years of life than at any other time and therefore, to have the greatest positive impact on children and ensure we tackle potential disadvantage, this is a priority area for us.

Within Argyll and Bute's Education Service we will ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to learn through our **priority actions**:

- Provide high quality Early Learning and Child Care and
- Work with parents, families and partners to ensure that the needs of our youngest children are met as effectively as possible.

What our improvement evidence for 2020-21 is telling us:

Priority Action 1 – Provide high-quality Early Learning and Child Care:

The commitment to challenge and support all ELC establishments to achieve Level 4 (Good) or better in Care Inspectorate inspections through developing strong leadership skills was affected by the suspension of inspections due to COVID-19. As a result there is a renewed focus on this target.

Our Early Years curricular framework, *The Three Asset Approach*, was implemented across settings delivering 1140 hours of ELC. The result has been improved quality in learning partnerships, greater pupil engagement with their own and others' cultures and increases and improvements in outdoor learning provision as part of the Early Years learning experience.

Consultations with parents on the success of the roll out of 1140 hours indicate that there is a high level of satisfaction in the three areas where the offer was established prior to August 2020. We are now delivering 1140 hours of ELC in every setting in Argyll and Bute. We are on track to ensure there is capacity to fully respond to increased demand for 1140 hour places in all localities by August 2021. Catering services have been introduced in some settings ahead of full roll out in August 2021.

Staff from all ELC settings engaged in centrally delivered CLPL, and staff from almost all settings engaged with sessions on the Early Years training calendar. Most settings engaged in a series of online training sessions to ensure practitioners and managers are familiar with 'Realising the Ambition' and how it should be used to secure improvements for our children and young people and this has had a direct impact on

the delivery of a high quality experience for our children.

We have invested extensively to improve ELC indoor environments and associated training has been provided to ensure that our curriculum planning fully utilises all available resources.

We have developed our own in-house training course on Outdoor Learning which has been verified by SQA, and have delivered training to all Cluster Lead Officers in order to promote this approach across all areas and deliver an equitable experience across Argyll and Bute. Cluster Leads have started to model and develop practice in outdoor learning in locality settings in line with Argyll and Bute's 'Three Asset' early years curriculum.

Priority Action 2 – Work with parents, families and partners:

Progress has been made by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in developing a new management information system to inform strategic developments around meeting the needs of children, young people and families. As a result, the appropriate data will be available to practitioners to implement the most effective interventions with children and their families in our ELC settings.

Further development and support of the Family Learning Framework to the localities was delayed as a result of COVID-19 and related restrictions on in-person delivery. However the Early years Team supported all settings to deliver a wide range of family learning experiences remotely during periods of lockdown, ensuring that our youngest children continued to engage with learning their peers during periods of lockdown.

All settings have engaged in high quality ELC–P1 transition projects in partnership with schools. These projects were overseen centrally by the Early Years team however were planned at local level with partners to provide activities for children tailored to specific local circumstances and needs.

Weekly delivery of Gaelic Bookbug sessions via digital technology have been well-received and up-take has been consistently high with families joining from across Argyll and Bute and as far away as Canada.

Additionally, weekly Gaelic4Parents sessions were delivered online with levels of engagement so high, sessions required differentiation for beginners and intermediate speakers.

KEY OBJECTIVE 4:	EQUIP YOUNG PEOPLE TO SECURE POSITIVE DESTINATIONS AND ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN LIFE
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What is this?

This is the progress our young people make in securing sustained positive destinations in employment, training or further/ higher education when they leave school and in the years immediately following.

Why is this important?

For our population in Argyll and Bute to grow through economic development, our industries need a workforce with the right skills, attitudes and capacities. Positive destinations information will inform us about how successful young people in Argyll and Bute are when they leave school. This will also tell us about the choices young people make and the difference in positive destinations between those from the most and least disadvantaged backgrounds.

Within Argyll and Bute's Education Service we will equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life through our **priority actions**:

- Equip children and young people with skills for learning, life and work;
- Promote enterprise and entrepreneurship, and
- Support lifelong learning.

What our improvement evidence for 2020-21 is telling us:

Priority Action 1 – Improve our approach to equipping children and young people with skills for learning, life and work:

In almost all schools, skills for learning, life and work are embedded in curriculum planning and everyday learning. All schools can demonstrate partnerships with other agencies and employers which advance learners' skills for employability and work.

We have used Scottish Government funding to employ Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Cluster Leads, to support all secondary schools in furthering links with business and industry and improve the development of employability skills in young people.

The Covid-19 pandemic provided significant challenge to the authority review of DYW strategy and resultant action plan. However, the management responsibility for Senior Phase and working to ensure positive destinations for young people post-school were reviewed and brought under one remit, to ensure coherent, consistent progress is made in raising attainment and supporting young people to fulfil their potential, regardless of place or context.

Covid-19 also impacted on the delivery of work-based learning including work placements and the practical element of college courses. Priority was given to pupils accessing a work placement as part of a Flexible Learning Plan that offered a positive destination and protocols were implemented to ensure vulnerable young people did

not miss a potentially life changing opportunity.

An internal audit report on Work Placements was completed in March 2021. The audit process involved almost all secondary schools and concluded that internal procedures, governance and the management of risk are reliable. Some recommendations to further improve to the provision of work placements were also included within the audit report, and these have been taken forward.

The establishment of a Rural Skills Group is currently at an early stage of inception as a result of the pandemic, with an inaugural meeting held and consideration being given to offering rural and land based training when possible. This provides a direct link to the context of Argyll and Bute and will encourage our young people to invest in a future in their own local area.

For Gaelic Medium learners, Gaelic Medium careers interviews took place in Dunoon Grammar School in December 2020 and were very well received by Gaelic pupils. A Gaelic Careers Fayre in collaboration with SDS for Students of GLE and GME was also delivered online, ensuring that learners within GME have access to language and subject specific careers advice and training which is in line with the experience of their English Medium peers.

Priority Action 2 – Promote enterprise and entrepreneurship:

Schools in Argyll and Bute continue to demonstrate, despite this sessions' restrictions, a focus on skills for life, learning and work. There has been valuable work carried out involving the DYW Board and the DYW Secondary Group to encourage a greater level of collaboration between the Business and Education sectors. A joint meeting explored perceptions, demands, issues and agreed priorities, and work in this area will continue into session 2021/22.

Some schools have developed strong partnerships with communities and local businesses to plan individual activities and projects to develop key life skills. Within the Helensburgh and Lomond area, Heron Brothers, the company delivering the new Waterfront Development, have worked collaboratively with central team officers and eight local schools to provide high quality learning opportunities which develop entrepreneurial and enterprise skills. Central Education Officers have worked with the

Digital Learning Team to ensure such opportunities are available to pupils in other areas of the authority via digital technology which ensures equity of opportunity for those in our more rural localities.

In partnership with Inspiralba and the Argyll and Bute Youth Forum, Community Learning employed a Youth Participation Trainee for 12 months. Part of their remit was to promote Social Enterprise as an option for young people in Argyll and Bute.

Additionally, various digital resources have been developed to promote employment and enterprise opportunities within Argyll and Bute including "STEM Journeys in Argyll" a video on STEM careers within the region and a series of DYW Videos including enterprise and entrepreneurship. Again, these are accessible for learners across the Argyll and Bute region.

Priority Action 3 – Support lifelong learning:

It was a challenging year for young people in terms of placements and delivery in the Foundation Apprenticeship programme. Despite this, there was a high uptake for the Foundation Apprenticeship programme with 26 students starting on both the one-year and two-year programmes in August 2020. A further five Modern Apprentices were recruited to work in ELC. As a result of our continued drive to provide opportunities for young people to train locally, we are ensuring sustainability in our provision to families, “growing our own” educationalists for the future and are actively encouraging employment and economic growth within Argyll and Bute.

The Community Learning and Development Team have actively participated in Covid-19 response within their communities including contributing to School Hubs, food delivery, call handling and transport.

The team have continued to deliver learner provision throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. They adapted to the use of blended and online provision to offer a range of activities including social, learning and wellbeing programmes and this has had a positive impact on children and families across the region.

Accessing online resources and platforms has become an essential for people to access public services, connect with family and friends and contribute towards reducing social isolation and loneliness. In Argyll and Bute the Community Learning response to digital needs has been through two projects: Connecting Scotland and Digital Connections. Between the two projects over 379 new devices and 220 refurbished devices have been distributed to vulnerable individuals and families in order to provide them with the opportunity to participate in and access the services available to support them.

A new Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership has been established and is working towards the production of an Argyll and Bute CLD Partnership Plan for 2021-2024, to be published in September 2021. Learner, partner and community consultation is underway and will set the strategic priorities and targets for the plan.

KEY OBJECTIVE 5:	ENSURE HIGH QUALITY PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
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What is this?

Partnership working and community engagement focuses on ways in which parents and carers, families and professionals work together to support children and young people's learning.

Why is this important?

We recognise that most of a child's development takes place out with our schools and ELC settings; therefore the role of families and carers is critical to ensuring our children and young people succeed. It is important that we empower parents and carers to be part of the decisions that are taken in respect of their children's education and development and to work alongside the staff in each school on improvement planning. It is also vital to engage parents and carers in dialogue around the work of education authorities, new approaches to learning and ultimately their role in their children's education. We must ensure that strong partnerships are created and maintained with local bodies including businesses, third sector organisations and community groups. This will broaden and deepen the curricular experiences offered to children and young people by our educational establishments.

Within Argyll and Bute's Education Service we will strengthen parental and community engagement through our **priority actions**:

- Develop and strengthen parental engagement and participation;
- Improve the curriculum links between schools and colleges;
- Develop and strengthen partnerships with business and the community, and
- Work together to secure improvement.

What our improvement evidence for 2020-21 is telling us:**Priority Action 1 - Develop and strengthen parental engagement and participation**

The Parental Advisory Group was piloted this year with representation from schools in different contexts across the authority (rural, urban, large, small, island), meeting to collaborate on the development of a Parent Council Toolkit website to support Parent Councils in their work to support schools. The website was launched in April and its effectiveness will be evaluated in session 2021/22.

All Parent Councils received three electronic Parent Council Update Newsletters with information to support their work with schools. Engagement with these newsletters increased with each publication.

Central Team staff developed a survey to gather the views of parents on the reopening of schools in August 2020. 4,065 parents took part with results being shared with Parent Councils via the Parent Council Newsletter. Results were also shared with all

Head teachers. The views of parents/carers were implemented in planning for the reopening of schools in August 2020.

Central Officers collaborated with Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network (SPION) to build levels of engagement and they co-created, in collaboration with Northern Alliance and Education Scotland, a Creative Conversations series on Parental Engagement.

Extensive consultation with parents/carers, children and young people and partners has been held to support the creation of the Community Learning Partnership Plan 2021-2024. In this way, the views of stakeholders have been central to planning for the next three years.

Parental surveys for Gaelic Education were undertaken culminating in a designated area on the Argyll and Bute website signposting national Gaelic learning resources for all ages, including adults, with the aim of empowering parents and carers in supporting their Gaelic medium learners.

A stakeholder survey on remote engagement with the Educational Psychology service has been circulated and completed across groups, including feedback from young people and parents / carers, with feedback informing delivery of services for the coming session.

In addition, Educational Psychologists have trialled cluster consultation for small schools. Where this has taken place the feedback has been positive. This approach is aimed at providing increased access to the service through consultation, with the additional benefit of the provision of peer support across the group.

The Instrumental Music Service (IMS) has undertaken a comprehensive consultation with service users evaluating the delivery method – during COVID and pre-COVID - the results of which will inform the 2021/22 post-COVID model.

Priority Action 2 – Improve our approach to improving the curriculum links between schools and colleges

Work began in 2020-2021 to develop common timetables between secondary schools. This will allow curriculum areas and subjects to be accessed between schools, using digital technology, broadening the range of subjects and qualifications available to young people. Common timetables will support schools and our partner Further Education (FE) Colleges to maximise the number of young people able to access FE courses across Argyll and Bute, and will support more young people into positive destinations.

Priority Action 3 – Improve our approaches to developing and strengthening partnerships with business and the community:

Almost all secondary schools have continued to maintain at least three school employer partnerships over the last year, although COVID-19 restrictions have created challenges for young people's engagement with business and employers. The planned audit of business partnership was delayed by COVID-19 restrictions and will form part of the work of the newly appointed Developing the Young Workforce Co-

ordinators.

Argyll and Bute's Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy 2019-2021 has continued to guide our delivery of strategic improvements in building parental buy-in, and has informed ongoing progress in working with parents/carers to secure improvement including the Parental Advisory Group.

The Instrumental Music Service has strengthened partnership between schools and the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) through the development and delivery of the 12 hour project, which aims to bring Music Instructors into schools to provide 12 hours of music-focused education to pupils in partnership with teachers. Several instructors have delivered the programme in schools. Feedback and evaluations from teachers and pupils have been positive.

Priority Action 4 – Improve our approach to working together to secure improvement:

This session, despite restrictions, we have made progress in our approach to Care-Experienced children's welfare and attainment through delegation of development and coordination of this area to the Education Lead for Care Experienced children and young people who is working with Head Teachers. The collection and analysis of data relating to Care-Experienced children and young people's attendance, exclusions, presentation for qualifications and attainment has been central to planning and interventions to support young people. The result has been a greater foregrounding and understanding of the attainment and welfare of this group of learners, and an increased focus on their progress into positive destinations post-school.

In addition, the Youth Advisory Panel was developed to take forward a Quality Improvement approach in ensuring children and young people have a voice in service planning of the Children and Young People Service Plan (CYPSP) 2023-26. A young person friendly animation explanation of the CYPSP was developed with a focus on ensuring the CYPSP is understood by our young people, thus supporting a deeper engagement with the plan amongst our children and young people.

KEY OBJECTIVE 6:	STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS
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What is this?

Excellence in school leadership improves the quality and impact of learning experiences for children and young people and develops the abilities and capacity of staff within schools at all levels. Strength of teacher professionalism improves the overall quality of the teaching workforce and the impact of their professional learning on children's progress and achievement. In Argyll and Bute we have provided professional learning opportunities at all levels from pre-career entry through to Head Teacher development and beyond, ensuring staff in Argyll and Bute have quality experiences and development opportunities. During a period of difficulty in teacher recruitment both in Argyll and Bute and nationally, it has been essential to ensure there is opportunity to enhance the profession by providing opportunities to "Grow Our Own" teacher leaders. We also seek to retain our highly trained teacher workforce by providing professional development opportunities to ensure that there are enough teachers and leaders with the requisite skills to guarantee our schools are sustainable and thrive within their local communities. Pupil leadership is important within the learning context and all schools encourage the pupil voice.

Why is this important?

Strong leadership across our Service helps ensure that all children achieve the best possible outcomes through the highest quality of learning and teaching. In Scotland we have a highly professional graduate teaching workforce with high professional standards set by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). In Argyll and Bute we want to continue to improve the professionalism of all of our education staff, and the quality and impact of their professional learning, to improve children's learning and the outcomes they achieve.

Within Argyll and Bute's Education Service we will strengthen leadership at all levels through our **priority actions**:

- Focus on effective educational leadership;
- Promote career long professional development for all staff;
- Provide professional learning opportunities for front line services

What our improvement evidence for 2020-21 is telling us:**Priority Action 1 – Focus on effective educational leadership:**

We have expanded our leadership opportunities for staff through our work with our Northern Alliance partners and associated leadership Workstream.

Continued representation and participation digitally, in both the *Scottish Professional Learning* and *Education Scotland Professional Learning and Leadership Networks* means that our staff increasingly benefit from the most up-to-date and relevant opportunities for Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL), regardless of geographical location..

Despite the pandemic, we have successfully supported the development of leadership at all levels and with an increase in the number of staff accessing these regional and national opportunities.

In addition, we have worked in collaboration with colleagues from our own authority, Northern Alliance, Education Scotland, SSSC and GTCS, to co-ordinate and provide access to coaching CLPL which meets the needs of all staff, from ELC through to Secondary.

Feedback from our own Local Authority coaching provision, targeted at Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) delivering Professional Review and Development (PRD) with colleagues, was extremely positive and attendees responded that their PRDs had been more productive on the whole.

In addition, the authority successfully received Professional Update verification from the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) in March 2021, refreshing our policy and guidance in collaboration with all stakeholders. This ensures that the authority has a rigorous and effective PRD process in place and our work in validating the quality of our workforce delivery is recognised and endorsed by GTCS for the forthcoming five years.

Members of the Early Years Team are in the closing stages of completing the Bachelor of Arts in Childhood Practice or Post Graduate and Masters Qualifications to develop leadership across Early Years as well as supporting student Nursery practitioners from Argyll College to gain their qualifications. This has increased capacity and developed key skills in leadership needed to deliver the ELC expansion to 1140 hours.

The Probationer Teacher training programme was delivered online this year by the Probationers Team with almost all newly qualified teachers achieving the Standard for Full Registration. There will be a strong recommendation that this year's cohort complete Education Scotland's Stepping Stones programme that supports teachers in the early years of their career.

Five Middle Leaders have participated in Education Scotland's Middle Leadership programme. Opportunities for aspiring Head Teachers and experienced Head Teachers have continued to be offered and take up has been consistently strong. Six candidates from both Primary and Secondary schools across Argyll and Bute have been successful in gaining a place on Into Headship, the statutory qualification required to become a Headteacher. This supports growing our own and succession planning.

Priority Action 2 – Promote career long professional development for all staff:

A clear and targeted focus on delivery of remote learning and supporting return to school in terms of staff and pupil wellbeing has been at the core of development in professional learning this year, to support our staff to support pupils and their families.

Support systems and induction processes for newly appointed Head Teachers were implemented in 2020-21 and will be developed further in Session 2021/22.

We have improved the leadership opportunities for staff across the authority and have increasing numbers of staff involved with both the University of the Highlands and

Islands (UHI) and Excellence in Headship. We will benefit further from the development of the CLPL Strategy Group to allow for an increase in the frequency of information shared about Leadership and CLPL opportunities. The CLPL group was paused due to the pressures on schools during the pandemic but will become a focus next session, and will facilitate reporting on the impact of educational leadership learning across Argyll and Bute

Professional Learning has been delivered to teachers as part of the Creative Learning projects, resulting in broadening approaches to literacy activities and developing and encouraging young people's response to art works and their context.

The local authority has maintained numbers who have attained The Standard for Headship through the Into Headship course in partnership with UHI and also have a strong cohort of six staff going forward for study 2021-22.

For the first time, we have three current Head Teachers nearing the completion of In Headship, an accredited programme delivered by UHI which builds towards a Masters in Leadership degree. We hope to build on this success in the next academic year.

Experienced Head Teachers have had further formal development opportunities: five colleagues participated in Excellence in Headship 2021-22, joining the other 19 colleagues who have joined in previous years and one is completing the Head Teachers Stretch Programme with Education Scotland.

All Head Teachers have had the opportunity to engage individually with a qualified coach and psychologist who has supported them since January 2021. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive around this work.

Priority Action 3 – Provide professional learning opportunities for front line services:

The Digital Learning team increased their CLPL offering to ensure that school and ELC staff had the capacity to deliver remote and blended delivery models as required throughout the session, with more than 1000 staff engagements with their weekly webinar sessions over the 12 month period April 2020 – April 2021.

Similarly, Glow usage, a national platform enabling education staff to deliver online learning safely, increased significantly since February 2020 with peak usage being in January 2021, where there was a 941% increase in G Suite usage, with nearly half a million sessions delivered.

A suite of training was provided for individual schools and centrally, including supporting children and young people to return to school following unprecedented periods of lockdown, Trauma-Informed Practice and focuses on autism and anxiety.

In addition, the Inclusion and Equality (IE) team further developed the skills and knowledge of key frontline staff including managing de-escalation techniques, understanding and supporting children with ADHD and using technologies to support learning leading to an increased ability to support the severe and complex needs of our most vulnerable children and young people.

Priority Action 4 – Maximising the Use of Resources

Through enhanced use of digital channels and platforms, communication of available CLPL opportunities and associated learning resources have been improved, ensuring improved consistency and equity in the availability of professional learning opportunities for education staff.

The Digital Learning team deployed 100% of 1356 devices made available via the Scottish Government digital inclusion grant to support learners who were experiencing digital poverty as a result of hardware availability. Schools reported this assisted greatly in closing the digital equity gap.

In addition, 100% of 254 connectivity solutions made available via the Scottish Government digital inclusion grant were deployed to support learners who are in digital poverty as a result of connectivity issues.

6.2 IMPROVEMENT TARGETS FOR SESSION 2021-22

For session 2021-22 we will focus on recovery, renewal and improvement within our local context and circumstances. Supporting the health and wellbeing of our children and young people and staff; identifying and intervening in potential gaps in learning; having a trauma-informed workforce; closing the poverty-related attainment gap; and ensuring that we are resilient and adaptable in responding to any future crises are central to our improvement planning. To reflect and respond to the changing national, regional and local context and priorities for Education we will review and renew our Education Vision and Strategy – “Our Children, Their Future” in collaboration and engagement with all of our stakeholders.

We will focus our improvement planning for 2021-22 around the four key priorities of the National Improvement Framework:

1. Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
2. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
3. Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing; and
4. Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver; destinations for all young people.

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

To aid recovery and improve attainment we will track and monitor both the short and longer term impacts of Covid-19 on our children and young people’s learning and take action through the use of data to mitigate the effects. We will continue to develop the data analytical, evaluation and quality improvement skills of our staff so they can make evidence-based decisions to raise attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

We will identify and offer high quality career long professional learning (CLPL) based on current research alongside our Northern Alliance and Education Scotland partners ensuring access for all practitioners to develop a shared understanding and delivery of high quality pedagogy and learning experiences.

The Service will respond to the independent review of Curriculum for Excellence conducted and reported upon by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Scottish Government will co-design a detailed implementation plan to be published by early September in collaboration with practitioners, learners, parents and other key stakeholders. The implementation plan will set out the roles and responsibilities of all involved in delivering improvements, and the indicators to be used to measure progress and undertake systematic reviews of implementation. The Scottish Government response to the OECD review can be accessed using the following link:

[Curriculum for Excellence: Scottish Government response to OECD Review - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/curriculum-for-excellence-scottish-government-response-to-oecd-review)

The Service will respond to the CfE implementation plan once published to deliver improvements across our schools reflecting the uniqueness of our communities.

We will further develop our e-Learning model working with our College partners, Northern Alliance partners, e-Sgoil, and as part of the National e-learning Offer, widening access to the curriculum and increasing resilience in terms of teaching capacity and our ability to respond to any future crises. CLPL for our staff will continue to be integral to this development and will be planned and implemented as required.

To ensure that workforce development delivers the capacity to achieve our educational vision and strategy for all our children and young people we will continue to collaborate for improvement with national, regional and local partners. To aid recovery we will monitor both the short and longer term impacts of Covid-19 on our staff's health and wellbeing and take action as required to mitigate the effects ensuring that staff are equipped to continue to undertake their professional duties.

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

We will continue to address disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap by analysing data to inform a strategic overview of attainment for disadvantaged groups across the Local Authority, and allow effective, targeted interventions. Through this approach we will develop a shared understanding of how poverty is affecting families within their context and place.

With regard to PEF interventions we will continue to work with schools to further develop deeper analysis of what is working well and share this across our schools and ELC settings to the benefit of a greater number of children and young people. This will include both local and national intelligence around successful interventions.

Following on from the Independent Care Review 2020, we will continue to work collaboratively with our Health and Social Care Partners (HSCP) to implement "The Promise Scotland" to support shifts in our policy, practice and culture for our care experienced infants, children, young people, adults and their families so that every child grows up loved, safe and respected and able to realise their full potential.

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

To aid recovery we will monitor both the short and longer term impacts of Covid-19 on our children and young people's health and wellbeing and take action as required to mitigate the effects and improve outcomes. We will focus on mental and emotional wellbeing, attendance, exclusions and transitions between and across stages of learning.

We will declare our commitment to educating our children and young people around their right to be valued, respected and treated with dignity in alignment with UNCRC legislation.

We will continue to implement our strategy to build a trauma informed and responsive workforce across our local authority services to make a difference to the lives of children and young people, parents and carers and our staff.

Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

In the Senior Phase (S4-S6) we will continue to review and refine learning pathways to ensure that we meet the needs of all learners and deliver personalisation and choice which will support young people transition to their identified positive destination. Through our Education Change programme we will improve our capacity to use our digital networks and digital skills to develop and deliver a flexible curriculum to ensure equity for all learners regardless of place or context.

To support our young people to their identified destination we will continue to ensure that skills for life, learning and work are a key feature of curriculum planning and delivery across all contexts for learning. Within this context we will recognise, identify and share effective practice from within Argyll and Bute, the Northern Alliance and across Scotland to promote local and national opportunities for developing enterprise and entrepreneurial skills in schools.

In collaboration with our Arm's Length External Organisation (ALEO) partner, Live Argyll, we will implement the Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan, to promote and foster the adoption of lifelong learning whilst measuring and evaluating the impact of such learning on our families and communities.

CONCLUSION:

This Education Plan has been prepared in compliance with the requirements set out in the Statutory Guidance accompanying the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 taking full account of the requirement to:

- Put in place the necessary arrangements to analyse the outcomes of the 2020/2021 Annual Education Plan and report on progress;
- Publish the Annual Education Plan for 2021/2022 responding to the requirements of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education;
- Implement the Annual Education Plan for 2021/2022 incorporating our local plans and priorities as set out in ***Our Children, Their Future***.

SECTION SEVEN: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ASL	Additional Support for Learning
ASN	Additional Support Needs
Aifl	Assessment is for Learning
BGE	Broad General Education
BWG	Education Service Budget Working Group
CEYP	Care Experienced Young People
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CLD	Community Learning and Development
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
DSM	Devolved School Management
ELCC	Early Learning and Childcare Centres
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GIRFEC	Getting It Right For Every Child
GTCS	General Teaching Council (for Scotland)
HE	Higher Education
HGIOS4	How good is our School 4
HGIOELC	How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
LAC	Looked After Children and Young People
NAR	National Assessment Resource
NIF	The National Improvement Framework
NPF	National Performance Framework
PATHS	Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies
PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
SCEL	Scottish College for Educational Leadership
SCQF	Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework
SCRA	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
SEN	Special Education needs
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SRA	Shared Risk Assessment
SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UNCRC	United Nations Convention Rights of the Child
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VSE	Validated Self Evaluation