

## **The ADES PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT NETWORK (PIN)**

### **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT UPDATE – 28 JANUARY 2021**

#### **C-19 EDUCATION RECOVERY GROUP (CERG)**

The C-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) was formed in April 2020, comprising key stakeholders from across the childcare, early learning and education sectors to provide leadership and advice to ministers and local government leaders in developing the strategic approach to the response and recovery of the ELC and education system.

The CERG have met 41 times to date, overseen 10 workstreams, and contributed in detail to a range of practical guidance to support schools and ELC as part of the response to Covid-19. The CERG continues to meet on a weekly basis, as part of the on-going decision making by Government. Current focus is on supporting at-home learning and advising on all potential elements of a future phased return to in-person learning. This is supported with appropriate analytical evidence, and ongoing scientific advice from the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues.

Further information on the CERG, including minutes of meetings, can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/groups/covid-19-education-recovery-group/>

Further information on the advisory sub-group, including advisory notes, can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues/>

Contact: [cerq@gov.scot](mailto:cerq@gov.scot)

#### **NIF REVIEW AND PUBLICATION**

The 2021 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan, and the NIF Interactive Evidence Report were published in December 2020.

SG has a statutory duty to review the NIF and publish an improvement plan on an annual basis. Since the schools closed in March, the response to COVID-19 and the need to reopen the schools safely has been the priority. As a result, there was less data available to inform the 2021 NIF and Improvement Plan. In particular, the collection of Achievement of CfE level (ACEL) data for 2019/20 was suspended.

As the ACEL data was unavailable, the NIF used the remaining key measures and sub-measures to assess progress towards closing the attainment gap. The participation measure shows that the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment has been improving since 2017. The gap between the proportion of 16-19 year olds in the most deprived areas participating in education, training, and employment compared with those in the least deprived

areas has narrowed from 11.5 percentage points to 9.9 percentage points. However, the picture is more mixed for the percentage of pupils leaving schools with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Levels 4, 5 and 6.

The NIF retained its increased focus on health and wellbeing, in particular the measures being taken to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and staff in the light of COVID-19, as well as the measures being taken to consider and to remedy any impact that there has been around reducing inequalities of outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.

Overall, the 2021 NIF reflects the changing priorities that have come about as a result of COVID-19, and the improvement actions are largely focused on supporting the education system to recover from the impact that the pandemic has had on all levels of the system, from staff and students, to parents, carers and the wider community.

Contact: *Judith Tracey, NIF Unit*  
[Judith.tracey@gov.scot](mailto:Judith.tracey@gov.scot)

## **INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS (ICEA)**

The second formal report from the ICEA was published alongside the NIF on 17 December. It is broadly supportive and concludes that Scottish education exhibits many strengths, and has an excellent standing internationally. It reflects on the fact that COVID-19 should be seen as both a disruption and an opportunity, and includes 12 recommendations to make Scotland's education system more resilient. These include a greater role for internal assessment in determining qualifications, and a move to a cyclical review of the curriculum.

The Scottish Government will respond formally to the ICEA's recommendations early in 2021.

Contact: *Judith Tracey, NIF Unit*  
[Judith.tracey@gov.scot](mailto:Judith.tracey@gov.scot)

## **SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**

### **Attainment Scotland Fund**

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap remains the defining mission of this government. Now, more than ever, there is a need to focus on equity and excellence.

Current funding arrangements for individual Scottish Attainment Challenge programmes are agreed up until the end of this parliamentary term. As well as taking total investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to over £750 million over the last five years, we are extending the programme for a further year beyond this Parliamentary term. The arrangement for the allocation of the £182 million

investment in 2021/22 will be announced to Local Authorities shortly. This includes the commitment to £250 million in Pupil Equity Funding available to schools over 2020/21 and 2021/22 which has already been announced. This provides more certainty for head teachers, to assist their planning both in the short and longer term

A report on progress on closing the poverty related attainment gap, drawing on a wide range of evidence, will be published in March 2021.

Work is also underway to develop evidence based options for future efforts to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap via a SAC 2.0 programme. The options will have the aim of accelerating and deepening recovery and progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

ADES are participating in stakeholder engagement as part of the review process.

Contact: *Suzanne Hutchison, Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit*  
[Suzanne.Hutchison@gov.scot](mailto:Suzanne.Hutchison@gov.scot)

## **Equity Audit**

The [Equity Audit](#) was published on 13 January 2021

The report includes a synthesis of key local, national and international literature, supplemented with local evidence gathered from 54 schools across Scotland. The findings help deepen our understanding of the impact the pandemic has had on children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A number of key themes emerged from the evidence review and from the school-based case studies.

- Health and wellbeing support
- Digital infrastructure and connectivity
- Support to parents and families
- Teaching provision and the quality of learning
- Support for teachers and the wider workforce

A new package of £45 million was announced at the same time, providing support for:-

- recruitment of additional staff,
- additional digital devices
- to provide additional family support

Insights from the audit are influencing on-going government support for children, families, schools and local authorities during this current period of home learning.

Contact: *David Leng, Head of Raising Attainment/Scottish Attainment Challenge*  
[david.leng@gov.scot](mailto:david.leng@gov.scot) (07769936222)

## **Assessment update**

### **NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

The National Qualifications 21 Group is working through a range of scenarios and is considering potential flexibilities for the alternative certification model, should they be needed as a result of the current remote learning approach. This includes consideration of extending the date for submitting provisional results, and further details on this will be published as soon as possible.

ADES have representatives on the NQ 2021 Group and an announcement is likely very soon.

**Contact:** *Nikki Milne, National Qualifications Team  
nikki.milne@gov.scot*

### **REVIEW OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE**

#### **CfE Review**

*Work is underway with the OECD to plan for the third and final engagement event on the Independent Review of CfE, which will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. This event will be for approximately 40 participants (national organisations/ local government/ schools and partners/ learners) and will provide a further opportunity for key stakeholders to feed into the Review. Invites will be issued within the next few weeks.*

*The SG Review Team is also working on preparing the initial evidence base document (submitted in summer 2020) for publication by mid-February.*

#### **Additional Work on Assessment & Qualifications**

The original remit of the CfE Review was extended to include a deeper focus on the future of assessment and qualifications approaches in the Senior Phase curriculum in Scotland. The aim of this work is to analyse Scotland's approach to assessment and qualifications and produce options for how we could enhance our approach, informed by international good practice.

This work is now underway and will involve: \_

- The OECD undertaking a desk-based analysis of Scotland's approaches to student assessment in relation to National Qualifications in the Senior Phase in comparison with approaches in other education systems. The comparative

analysis will consider education systems that are relevant to Scotland's experience and objectives in education.

- A second seminar with stakeholders (in addition to that planned for the wider Review) to present and discuss the preliminary findings from the desk-based analysis and to gather stakeholders' feedback and suggestions on how to move forward.
- The production of a comparative paper building on the desk-based analysis and stakeholder engagement seminar and provides a set of options for Scotland to consider.

This work will be aligned with the current OECD Review of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and a comparative paper will be published in the summer 2021, following the publication of the CfE Review Report in June 2021.

Contact: *Julie Anderson*, National Co-ordinator: OECD Review of CfE  
[julie.anderson@gov.scot](mailto:julie.anderson@gov.scot) (07780492404)

## **INSIGHT**

Insight was released in December 2020. This Insight release included additional messaging for 2020 providing guidance on how to use the 2020 data (and what Insight cannot be used for in light of the change in the way SQA Awards were produced in Summer 2020). We are now working on producing an updated tool for release at end-February.

The delays to release in 2020 were largely due to the delays in receipt of the attainment data from SQA following the change to the assessment process, combined with technical issues related to working from home, and pressures arising from Covid.

The Insight Advisors are continuing to work with authorities and schools who have asked for their support.

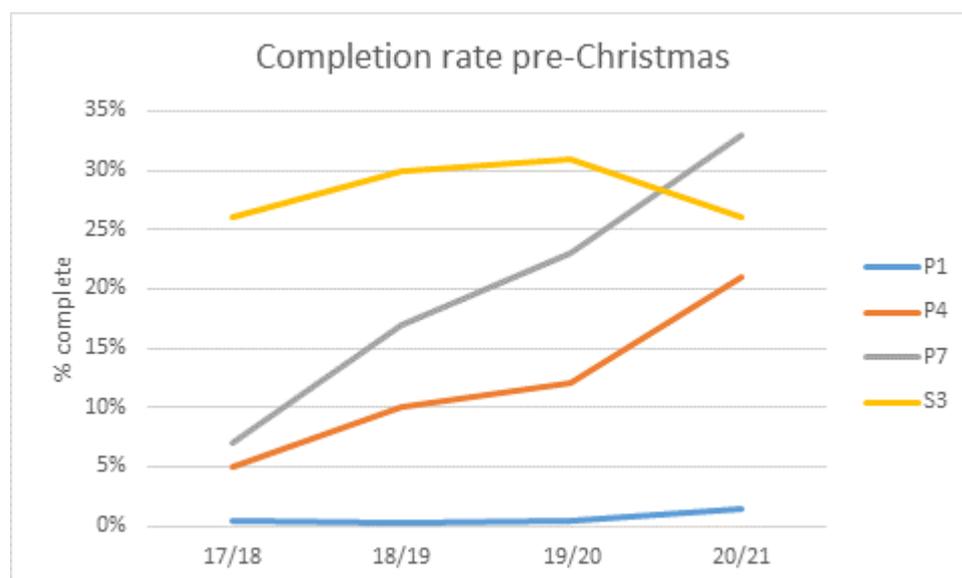
**Contacts:** *Jill Morton*, Education Analytical Services, Learning Directorate  
[Jill.morton@gov.scot](mailto:Jill.morton@gov.scot) (07917 175 112)

*Fiona Lawrence*, Insight Adviser  
[Fiona.Lawrence@gov.scot](mailto:Fiona.Lawrence@gov.scot)

## SNSA/MCNG

The SNSA has had over 138,000 presentations this academic year. This represents approximately 22% of the full-year maximum and is the third consecutive rise in autumnal completions from a baseline in the first year of 10%.

The pattern is mixed across the four stages though, with the most significant rises in P4, and particularly P7. S3 has a slightly lower completion in autumn 2020 compared to the previous two years. The chart below illustrates completion of the SNSA in the autumn from 17/18 to 20/21.



There have been 128 MCNG presentations this academic year. It is important to note that the total learner population for the MCNG is significantly smaller than for the SNSA.

The SNSA and MCNG assessments remain available for those learners who are currently in school, although no more than a handful of assessments were undertaken in January. As always, national standardised assessments should be delivered as part of normal classroom activity, with a view to using the diagnostic information generated by the assessment to inform next steps in learning.

The facility to review reports for learners who sat assessments prior to Christmas has seen understandably modest but reasonably widespread activity.

We recognise that you may have enquiries from teachers or schools about whether learners attending a school or a hub can be presented for the SNSA or MCNG. When we receive such enquiries at the Scottish Government we explain:

The fundamental purpose of the assessments is the provision of diagnostic information for teachers about the progress of children and young people in their classes. This information can then be used, along with other

assessment evidence, to help plan next steps in learning. While decisions regarding the timing and delivery of national standardised assessments remain very much at the discretion of teachers, we would suggest that any consideration of assessment delivery through the hubs should be informed by the following:

- whether children and young people are learning in a normal classroom setting, both in terms of consistently familiar teaching staff, and a known physical environment
- whether the diagnostic information generated by the assessment will be used to inform the child's next steps in learning

Contacts: *David Storrie, SNSA Project Lead*  
[david.storrie@gov.scot](mailto:david.storrie@gov.scot)  
*Ralph Donaldson, SNSA / MCNG Product Owner*  
[ralph.donaldson@gov.scot](mailto:ralph.donaldson@gov.scot) (07850928714)

## **National Standardised Assessments for Scotland - phase two**

As we move towards phase two of the delivery of national standardised assessments in Scotland, the procurement exercise for the contract to provide a combined platform for the SNSA and MCNG assessment sets is currently ongoing. As part of phase two, we have decided to bring the development of content for the MCNG in-house to the Scottish Government. We will continue to seek active and ongoing input from GME practitioners and local authority representatives, in creating content for the sector, and in supporting the quality assurance process that will be led by Education Scotland.

We are seeking early discussions with GME authorities as to how best to secure input and expertise from GME staff in a way that is manageable and sustainable for them and their employers, while at the same time providing sufficient continuity and reliability to the development processes for the MCNG. Anyone who is interested in taking part in these discussions should contact Katie Beattie on: [Kathryn.beattie@gov.scot](mailto:Kathryn.beattie@gov.scot) or 0131 244 7027.

In addition, we are recruiting a new role to the Scottish Government of GME Assessment Content Manager. The role has been advertised on a 23 month fixed term basis (noting the possibility for that role to be confirmed as permanent thereafter). We see this as a massively important role and a really exciting development in the next step of the MCNG's journey.

Contacts: *Kathryn Beattie, MCNG Project Lead*  
[kathryn.beattie@gov.scot](mailto:kathryn.beattie@gov.scot)

*David Storrie, SNSA Project Lead*  
[david.storrie@gov.scot](mailto:david.storrie@gov.scot)  
*Ralph Donaldson, SNSA / MCNG Product Owner*  
[ralph.donaldson@gov.scot](mailto:ralph.donaldson@gov.scot) (07850928714)

## **Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Census and Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census**

6 local authorities 'volunteered' to undertake the HWB Census, and 8 local authorities 'volunteered' to undertake the PIE Census in the 2020/21 school year.

However, in light of the current lockdown, feedback received from the 'volunteered' local authorities at a recent joint HWB Census and PIE Census Implementation Group earlier this month indicated that the current Covid situation has required them to focus on new work priorities. Also, due to the fact that most pupils are currently no longer attending school, then conducting these Censuses would prove impossible in this school year (particularly as the HWB Census requires children and young people to be in school to undertake the Census in a "safe and confidential" environment).

Scottish Ministers will shortly be updated on the feedback received from local authorities, in that both of these pilot Censuses will now be unable to proceed in the current school year due to current lockdown. However, the Scottish Government will continue to proceed on the basis that full roll-out of both of these Censuses will take place in the 2021/22 school year.

Contact: *Jill Morton, Education Analytical Services, Learning Directorate*  
[Jill.morton@gov.scot](mailto:Jill.morton@gov.scot) (07917 175 112)