

REPORT TO: Education & Children’s Services Committee

MEETING DATE: 19 March 2024

BY: Executive Director, Education and Children’s Services

SUBJECT: Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek the Committee’s approval of the draft raising attainment strategy: Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. (Appendix 1).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- i. Approve the draft raising attainment strategy: Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26. (Appendix 1)
 - ii. Note the steps being taken to ensure raising attainment for all learners and closing the poverty related attainment gap in sessions 2023/24; 2024/25 and 2025/26.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a statutory duty on Scottish Ministers to review and publish the National Improvement Framework (NIF). This plan is designed to deliver the overarching aims of excellence for all through improved attainment and equity through closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.2 National data shows that East Lothian remains relatively less deprived than other local authorities. However, these estimates do not take account of the learners who come from families who: live in rented accommodation in higher decile areas; live in hidden poverty or survive by working multiple jobs.

- 3.3 To mitigate the impact of the poverty, we have equity principles which guide our authority wide approach to support our learners to reach their full potential.
- 3.4 Through the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), East Lothian Council receives three main funding streams to support vulnerable learners. These are the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund and the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF).
- 3.5 PEF is paid directly to school based on the number of learners registered for free school meals. PEF guidance has been developed to ensure robust approach to planning and evaluation of associated interventions.
- 3.6 The Care Experienced Attainment Fund is provided to local authorities to improve educational outcomes for learners with care experience. This fund provides for a designated Education Support Officer to support, track, and monitor individual learners. Stretch aims for the attainment and attendance of care experienced learners have been set for session 2023/24 and detailed in the strategy.
- 3.7 The SEF is allocated to all local authorities to invest in their approaches to closing the poverty related attainment gap. To measure the impact of the SEF, there are core and core plus stretch aims for 2025/26 with annual iterations. There are six core stretch aims prescribed by the Scottish Government and an additional eight core plus aims that are set by East Lothian Council.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 3.8 To provide Head Teachers with their progress towards stretch aims, schools are provided with their data on a monthly tracker report. This data facilitates support and challenge discussion with central officers.
- 3.9 East Lothian Council reports on its progress towards stretch aims through the Education Progress and Improvement Plan. This is published annually and shared with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, and East Lothian Council Education & Children's Services Committee.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications in this report.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - none
- 6.2 Personnel - none
- 6.3 Other - none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All. Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 (Appendix 1)

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APPENDIX 1

Excellence & Equity: Raising Attainment for All

Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26



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1 Introduction

East Lothian Council is committed to providing the best education service in Scotland through a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. We aim to ensure East Lothian's children, young people and families are confident and resilient, and fully included as valued contributors within their schools and communities. To do this we:

- share common values, approaches, behaviour and a strong commitment to do the very best for East Lothian's children and young people;
- are ambitious for our children and young people;
- promote and prioritise early intervention and prevention;
- take a relationship-based approach with each other, our children, young people and their families promote creativity and innovation and
- want East Lothian to be an inclusive place to live and learn.

The purpose of this document is to outline our strategy to raise the attainment of all in achieving excellence and to ensure equity by closing the poverty related attainment gap.

2 National Improvement Framework (NIF)

The National Improvement Framework for Education and the Curriculum for Excellence supports the commitment of East Lothian Council to ensure improving attainment and achievement for all children and young people.

2.1 NIF Priorities

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016, places a statutory duty on Scottish Ministers to review the NIF and publish an updated plan on an annual basis. This plan supports and informs our improvement planning in East Lothian Council.

The NIF priorities are:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education.
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

2.2 NIF Drivers

Six drivers, of equal importance, have been identified in the NIF as contributing to continuous improvements in our education system. These are:

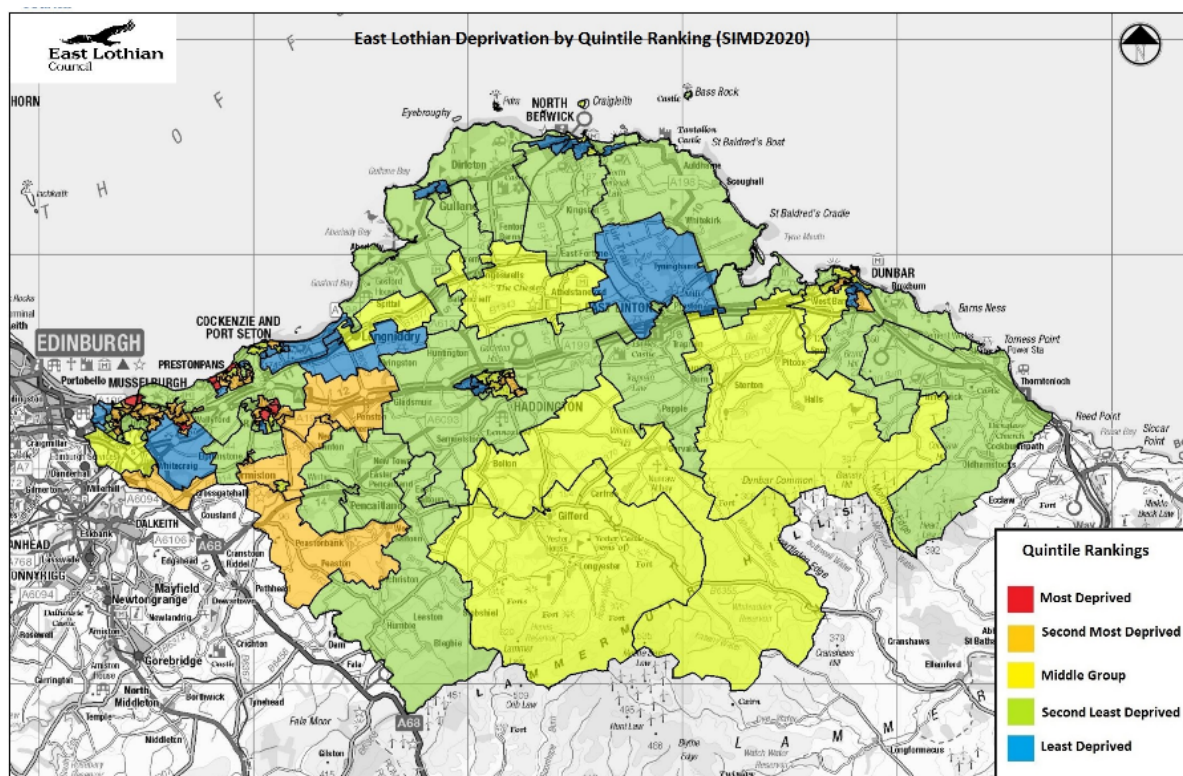
- School and Early Learning and Childcare leadership;
- Teacher and practitioner professionalism;
- Parental/carer involvement and engagement;
- Curriculum and assessment;
- School and Early Learning and Childcare improvement and
- Performance information

3 Context of East Lothian Council

3.1 Socio-Economic Context

East Lothian is made up of 132 data zones across 6 wards. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 showed that 8 of these data zones fall within the most deprived (quintile) 20% of areas in the whole of Scotland.

This is illustrated in the graphic below of data zone SIMD 2020 deprivation ranking by quintile in East Lothian:



The Council's 2017-22 Council Plan and the Partnership's 2017-2027 East Lothian Plan share the overarching objective of: **reducing inequalities within and across our communities**. The [Council's 2022-2027 Plan](#) continues to hold this objective to **Reduce Poverty & Inequality**: Supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality.

3.2 Child Poverty in East Lothian

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 shows that East Lothian remains relatively less deprived than other Scottish local authorities, with the majority of East Lothian falling into the least deprived of the SIMD (26 of the 132 data zones in East Lothian are in the least deprived quintile 4). This is a conservative estimate, and many families live in private lets or rented accommodation in higher decile areas, living in hidden poverty, and surviving by working multiple jobs. ¹

The following table summarises the extent of child poverty in East Lothian:

	2018/19	2019 /20	2020/21
% / No. of children & young people in low-income households	22.7% / 4,392	24.5% / 4,808	18.9% / 3,640

¹ [East Lothian Child Poverty Action Report 2020 22 \(3\).pdf](#)

3.3 Improvement Priorities

East Lothian Council's approaches ensure that we support our children and families to have the very best start in life and that they can go on to have fulfilling lives, better health and living longer.

We have a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All and work together to Get it Right for Every Child and to ensure that all our children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

To mitigate the impact of the poverty, we have **equity principles** which means that we:

- recognise the impact that poverty can have on the wellbeing, attainment and achievement of children and young people and are **rigorous in our approaches to mitigate this**.
- are **ambitious** for all our children and young people and it is our collective endeavour to **maximise on their school experiences and opportunities through our curriculum and coursing**.
- use **inclusive** approaches to **broaden the parameters of success** for children and young people.
- use **formative and summative assessment processes** to fully understand and support children / young people's progress and attainment.
- use **robust tracking and monitoring procedures** including **school attendance** to allow for the **early identification** of children and young people who are **at risk** of underachieving and put appropriate interventions in place.
- use **moderation** to inform our approaches to supporting attainment.
- **work collegiately** and with partners to provide support and help for children and young people where required.
- recognise the **positive impact that gaining qualifications and achievements** has on the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people and seek to **maximise** on these opportunities.

4 Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)

4.1 SAC Overview

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Refresh builds on the evidence of key publications including: the Scottish Government and Education Scotland's five year report² on progress toward

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021/>

closing the poverty related attainment gap; the Equity Audit³; the Audit Scotland Report on educational outcomes⁴ and the OECD review⁵.

This will support East Lothian Council to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The SAC will provide support for children and young people through the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF); the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (CECYPF) and the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF).

East Lothian Council will consider the totality of Attainment Scotland Funding (Strategic Equity Funding (SEF), Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) & Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding) and work collaboratively with partners to evidence closing the attainment gap for our most vulnerable children and young people.

4.2 Pupil Equity Funding PEF

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is additional funding allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Scottish Government has committed to this funding from 2017/18 to 2025/26.

Schools will receive £1,225 in 2023/24 for each child in P1 to S3, or equivalent, who is registered for free school meals under national eligibility criteria. The allocations are fixed for the duration of the funding.

In line with Education Scotland's *Pupil Equity Fund: National Operational Guidance*⁶ which advises Local Authorities to issue specific complementary guidance about how PEF will operate locally, East Lothian Council issued PEF Operating Guidance to all school in April 2023.

4.2 Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund

Underpinned by The Promise⁷, the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund is a targeted resource provided to local authorities to support care experienced children and young people from

³ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/impact-assessment/2021/01/equity-audit-deepening-understanding-impact-covid-19-school-building-closures-children-socio-economically-disadvantaged-backgrounds-setting-clear-areas-focus-accelerating-recovery/documents/equity-audit/equity-audit/govscot%3Adocument/equity-audit.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/improving-outcomes-for-young-people-through-school-education>

⁵ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/bf624417-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/bf624417-en>

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2023/06/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/documents/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/govscot%3Adocument/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023.pdf>

⁷ <https://thepromise.scot/change-programme-one-pdf.pdf>

birth to the age of 26. The funding is provided to local authorities and aims to improve the educational outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

Through this fund, the post of an Education Support Officer for Care Experienced Children and Young People has been created (ESO CEYP). This role supports environments where care experienced learners will feel more settled, motivated, and resilient to ensure a better experience at school. This, in turn, will help to improve attendance, educational outcomes, and contribute to better life chances.

ESO CECYP is a senior member of education staff in a local authority who works at a strategic level, but not in a physical school building. ESO CECYP will support, track and monitor children and young people as if they attended a single school, however, children and young people will remain on their school roll.

To provide consistency of tracking and monitoring, stretch aims for the attainment and attendance of care experienced children and young people have been set for session 23/24. These are

4.2.1 Stretch Aims

School Attendance (Primary)	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap%
Level (22-23)	93	91.3	1.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	93.5	92.3	1.2
Improvement	0.5%	1%	0.5%

School Attendance (Secondary)	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap %
Level (22-23)	86.1	77.1	9
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	87	80	7
Improvement	0.9	2.9	2

ACEL Literacy (P1,4,7)	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap %
Level (22-23)	66.8	27.8	39
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	68	32.8	34
Improvement	1.2	5	5

ACEL Numeracy (P1,4,7)	Non-Care Experienced Levels %	Care Experienced %	Gap %
	Level (22-23)	74.5	27.8
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	76	32.8	41.7
Improvement	1.5	5	5

Leavers Attainment 5+@1, or more	Overall %	Care Experienced (<i>Looked After on Insight</i>) %	Gap %
	Level (21-22)	89.4	65.2
Stretch Aim to be achieved (23-24)	89.7	68.7	20.7
Improvement	0.3	3.5	4

4.3 Strategic Equity Fund (SEF)

Strategic Equity Funding is allocated to all local authorities to invest in approaches to close the poverty related attainment gap. Funding is based on Children in Low Income Families data. The allocation for East Lothian Council is:

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£200,009	£397,793	£595,488	£793,182

To measure the impact of the SEF, there are associated 'core' and 'core plus' stretch aims for 2025/26 with annual iterations. The tables below illustrate the stretch aims for all children and young people and those living in quintiles one and five. There are also stretch aims for children and young people living in quintiles two, three and four. These are detailed in each school's Equity Tracker which are published on the first Friday of the month via Google.

4.3.1 SEF Core Stretch Aims

All local authorities in Scotland are required to set core stretch aims in relation to:

	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels LITERACY P1,4,7			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	66	51	73	22
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	68	55	75	20
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	71	59	77	18
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	74	63	79	16
Improvement (%)	8	12	6	6

	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels NUMERACY P1,4,7			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	74	57	81	23
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	76	61	82	21
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	79	65	84	19
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	82	69	86	17
Improvement (%)	8	12	5	6

	The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 (All Awards)			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	84.8	60.7	93.2	32.4
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	87.7	67	96	29
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	89	70	96.5	26.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	90.8	73	97	24
Improvement (%)	6	12.3	3.8	8.4

	The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 (All Awards)			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	58.8	21.4	77.2	55.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	65.5	33	82	49
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	67.1	36	82.5	46.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	69	39	83	44
Improvement (%)	10.2	17.6	5.8	11.7

	The proportion of 16–19-year-olds participating in education, employment, or training			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	96.1	91.5	98.9	7.4
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	96.4	91.9	99.0	7.1
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	96.6	92.2	99.1	6.9
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	96.9	92.5	99.2	6.7
Improvement (%)	0.8	1	0.3	0.7

	Health & Wellbeing - Overall School Exclusions			
	Overall levels rate	SIMD Quintile 1 rate	SIMD Quintile 5 rate	Gap (Q1-Q5) rate
Baseline	22.1	58.4	7.7	-50.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	19.6	55.5	7.7	-47.8
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	18.9	52.7	7.6	-45.1
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	18.3	50.1	7.5	-42.6
Improvement (%)	3.8	8.3	0.2	-8.1

4.3.2 SEF Core Plus Stretch Aims

East Lothian Council has also set core plus stretch aims in relation to:

	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels LITERACY S3			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	76	65	84	19
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	82	71	89	18
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	84	75	91	16
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	87	79	93	14
Improvement (%)	11	14	9	5

	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels NUMERACY S3			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	84	60	91	31
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	84	63	92	29
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	86	66	93	27
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	88	69	94	25
Improvement (%)	4	9	3	6

	The proportion of school leavers attaining 5 or more passes at SCQF level 1 (All Awards)			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	89.4	67.9	95.4	27.6
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	89.7	68	96	28
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	91.3	71	97	26
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	93.2	74	98	24
Improvement (%)	3.8	6.1	2.6	3.6

	The proportion of school leavers attaining 5 or more passes at SCQF level 5 (A-C)			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	53.3	17.9	73.1	55.2
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	58.3	29	76	47
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	60	35	76.5	41.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	62	41	77	36
Improvement (%)	8.7	23.1	3.9	19.2

	The proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more passes at SCQF level 6 (A-C)			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	55.7	19.6	75.3	55.7
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	60.1	26	77	51
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	61.2	29	77.5	48.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	63.2	32	78	46
Improvement (%)	7.5	12.4	2.7	9.7

	The proportion of school leavers attaining Literacy at SCQF level 5			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	78.3	53.6	90	36.4
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	82.1	68	92	24
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	83.6	71	92.5	21.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	85.5	74	93	19
Improvement (%)	7.2	20.4	3	7.4

	The proportion of school leavers attaining Numeracy at SCQF level 5			
	Overall levels %	SIMD Quintile 1 %	SIMD Quintile 5 %	Gap (Q1-Q5) %
Baseline	66.1	41.1	83.1	42
Stretch Aim to be achieved 23/24	71.1	48	84	36
Stretch Aim to be achieved 24/25	72.9	52	84.5	32.5
Stretch Aim to be achieved 25/26	74.6	56	85	29
Improvement (%)	8.5	14.9	1.9	13

Each school will also have an individual stretch aim for pupil attendance. This is based on the following sliding scale:

Individual School Attendance 22/23	Minimum Annual Increase (23/24, 24/25 & 25/26)
Above 95%	Maintain
90-95%	0.5%
85-90%	1%
80-85%	1.5%

Total ELC Figures	22/23 Rate	23/24 Stretch Aim %	24/25 Stretch Aim %	25/26 Stretch Aim %
Primary	93	93.5	93.9	94.2
Secondary	85.9	87	88	89
Total	90	90.7	91.4	92

Each school's equity tracker will contain details of their attendance baseline and associated stretch aim.

4.4 Tracking and Monitoring

To provide Head Teachers and key members of the senior and extended leadership teams with their progress towards stretch aims, on the first Friday of each month individual school equity trackers will be updated and shared via Google.

Equity trackers will be populated centrally by the Information and Research team to provide progress for individual schools.

The equity trackers will provide data which will facilitate support and challenge discussion with relevant central team link staff including the Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion, Quality Improvement Officers and Education Support Officers.

Progress towards stretch aims will also be captured in Education Scotland's Tri-annual reporting to the Scottish Government.

4.5 Governance and Reporting

East Lothian Council will report on progress towards our stretch aims through our Education Progress Report and Improvement Plan. This is published annually and shared with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and East Lothian Council Education Committee.