



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Roinn Foghlaim is Seirbheisean Chloinne



Frèam-obrach Leasachaidh Nàiseanta
National Improvement Framework
2024-25

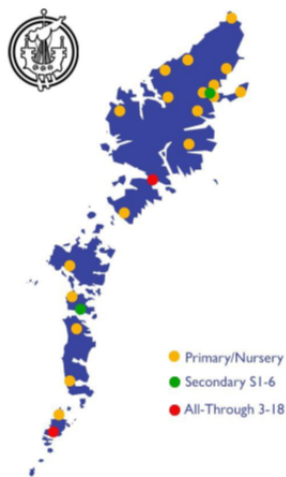
Aithisg Bhliadhnail agus Plana
Leasachaidh
Annual Report and Improvement Plan

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Co-theacsa na Comhairle

The context of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar



- 22 schools across six island groups. 18 primary, two secondary and two 3-18 schools.
- 3200 primary and secondary pupils and 400 in council-operated ELC provisions.
- 47% of primary pupils in GME.
- Two schools with ASN Enhanced Provisions.

Authority Size

When considering the availability and validity of performance information and presentation measurement data the relatively small pupil population in the Western Isles must be considered. A population of 3200 primary and secondary pupils and 400 children enrolled in early learning centres means that cohorts in some year groups can be small. The further sub-division of data into Gaelic or English Medium Education can reduce further cohort sizes. As a result, small fluctuations in raw data performance can result in seemingly significant percentage variations. It is important to consider local data in context.

‘Gaelic First’ & Gaelic Medium Education

Since the introduction of the Comhairle’s ‘Gaelic First’ Policy in 2019, the default language for enrolment of learners has been Gaelic. In addition to the policy itself, support has been provided through Early Years, Gaelic Medium Education and ancillary services for both learners and parents. This is to increase confidence and support positive decisions about enrolment into Gaelic Medium Education.

In the first year of the policy, there was a significant increase in P1 Gaelic Medium Education enrolments to 58%. This session, 42% of pupils starting primary education in the Western Isles in August have entered Gaelic Medium Education. The Comhairle recognises that the most significant reason for the decrease in numbers has been deferrals of entry to primary education, with 25% of those planning on opting for Gaelic Medium Education choosing to defer until next year. The Comhairle will continue to ensure that policy and guidance bespoke to Gaelic is used robustly to identify our priorities for improvement.

SIMD and Poverty Indicators

As a small authority with a predominantly rural low-density population, it is not possible to use the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as a meaningful and reliable measure of the impact of poverty on attainment and achievement. Where it is possible and reliable data exists to do so, the use of Free School Meals (FSM) data may be used as a proxy measure for the poverty-related attainment gap locally.

FSM does, however, also have its limitations due to statistically low uptake of entitlement and the impact of the expansion of universal free school meals for P1-P5. As well as FSM, Comhairle schools use a range of wider local indicators and discreet knowledge about the circumstances of families when identifying poverty-related attainment gaps and providing support via the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF).

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands are developing an Islands Poverty Index. This is to provide a robust set of poverty measures to be selected for schools that are similar across the three islands. The Index will improve collaborative working between these schools.

e-Sgoil

Since its inception in August 2016, e-Sgoil's main driver has been to enhance equity in terms of subject choice for all learners, irrespective of geographic location. It was also envisaged as a means of addressing teacher recruitment issues and allows for flexible work opportunities. Teachers are recruited to the e-Sgoil supply bank and engage remotely with schools and learners across Scotland, broadening and enhancing the curricular offer at all levels.

e-Sgoil works in partnership with schools to address the barriers faced by many young people in education. Although e-Sgoil started as a local solution to a local problem, it has since been firmly established as a national provider, working closely with partners such as Education Scotland and Regional Improvement Collaboratives to deliver the National e-Learning Offer (NeLO). NeLO includes a number of national programmes such as Evening Study Support, i-Sgoil (provision for interrupted learners) and DYW Live. e-Sgoil extends the range of opportunities available to young people across Scotland in an equitable manner.

Co-theacsa ar plana

The context of our plan

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (www.gov.scot) places duties on education authorities in relation to the delivery of school education and having due regard to reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. This Act requires education authorities to prepare and publish an annual report setting out the steps taken to secure improvements in education provision and outcomes set out in the National Improvement Framework Improvement (NIF) Plan and those identified by the Council. This Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Education and Children's Services Annual Report and Improvement Plan continues to take account of the priorities set out in the Scottish Government's 2023 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan.

In creating this plan, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has paid due regard to the revised statutory guidance, and the following statutory responsibilities:

- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 as amended by the Education (Scotland) Act, 2016
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Community Learning and Development Regulations, 2013
- Promotion of Equal Opportunities under section 31 of 2000 Act
- Promotion of parental involvement under Sections 2 and 2A of the Scottish Schools (Parental involvement) Act, 2006
- Promotion of health promoting schools under section 2A of the Standards in Scotland's schools etc. Act, 2000
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- The Fairer Scotland Duty
- Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009
- The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education 2017
- UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024

Planning in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

In taking forward this improvement plan, the Comhairle's Education and Children's Services Department recognises that no aspect of educational improvement can be totally separated from any other. This plan demonstrates the Comhairle's commitment to integrating key planning priorities into a single combined improvement plan underpinned by the drivers for improvement found in the National Improvement Framework.

There are a number of strategic plans which set a wider context and provide a basis for a common set of aims with other services within Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:

- National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan
- SAC Framework for Recovery and Acceleration + Stretch Aims
- Plana Cànan Gàidhlig Comhairle nan Eilean Siar 2023-2028 | Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028
- Outer Hebrides Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Inter-Island Collaborative Improvement Project
- Outer Hebrides LOIP
- Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)
- Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative Plan 2022-2025
- e-Sgoil Impact Report
- School Improvement Plans
- Comhairle Corporate Strategy and Business Plan

Frèam-obrach Leasachaidh Nàiseanta agus Plana Leasachaidh

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan

Vision

Excellence through raising attainment and improving outcomes: ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to shape a sustainable future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

Achieving equity: ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

We need Scottish education to deliver both excellence in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering equity so that every child and young person thrives and has the best opportunity to succeed, regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs. We will respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of every child and young person in order to ensure they are incorporated fully across the Scottish education system. In order to achieve this, we are working with our partners to develop an empowered and collaborative system, where young people have an equal voice and everyone's contribution is heard and valued, and improving children and young people's outcomes is at the heart of everything we do.

Key priorities of the National Improvement Framework

- 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.

Six drivers of improvement

- School and ELC leadership

- Teacher and practitioner professionalism
- Parent/carer involvement and engagement
- Curriculum and assessment 6
- School and ELC improvement
- Performance information

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has a vision to secure the very best outcomes for all our young people and has a strong focus on the importance of high-quality education in securing employability and academic pathways. This is to meet the Comhairle's aspirations to retain and strengthen our island population through social and economic growth.

We recognise the importance that Gaelic language and culture plays in the educational experiences of our young people. We consider that the delivery the priorities of the National Improvement Framework and our own Business Plan must universally recognise Gaelic language, Gaelic Medium Education and the Comhairle's 'Gaelic First' policy.

The priorities and drivers of the National Improvement Framework and Plan articulate strongly with our vision for the learners and communities of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. We recognise that improving attainment, addressing the poverty-related attainment gap, improving health and wellbeing and strengthening employability and post-school destinations will contribute fundamentally to delivering our vision and aims.

Ar Lèirsinn agus Prìomhachasan

Vision & Priorities

The vision of the Education, Skills and Children's Services Department for the children, young people and communities of the Western Isles is:

A' Coileanadh Sàr-mhaitheas Còmhla - Achieving Excellence Together

For 2023-2024, our service delivery and business planning priorities have been set as:

1. Deliver high-quality learning and teaching in all educational settings, recognising the rights and needs of all children and young people.
2. Ensure effective and accountable leadership for all.
3. Improve the use of data to secure excellent outcomes for all learners in the Outer Hebrides.
4. Improve curriculum, learning and wellbeing transition planning at all key stages for children and young people.

The Education, Skills and Children's Services Department's vision and values are under review with a consultation having been completed in September 2024.

Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative

The Northern Alliance is a Regional Improvement Collaborative between eight local authorities, across the north and west of Scotland - Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands - with a shared vision to improve the educational and life chances of our children and young people through collaboration.

The Northern Alliance continues to strive to achieve workstream priorities, set out in its Regional Improvement Plan. These priorities remain aligned to the National Improvement Framework priorities. The Comhairle aims to recognise and reference aspects of the Northern Alliance Plan within our own improvement plan for the coming year.

Phase four of the Northern Alliance Improvement Plan was published in 2022 and sets out improvement priorities for the collaborative through to 2025. The plan defines the collaborative's strategy for improvement that focuses on four key components:

- Focusing Direction
- Cultivating Collaborative Cultures
- Deepening Learning
- Securing Accountability

The plan has been developed in line with Michael Fullan's "Right Drivers for Whole System Success" which are:

- Wellbeing and Learning (Feeling well and learning well).
- Social Intelligence (How we work and learn together).
- Equality Investments (How we break down barriers to wellbeing and learning).
- Systemness (Working together to improve our system).

The plan also recognises its alignment within the National Improvement Framework as well as the articles of the UNCRC. Northern Alliance RIC vision: Developing a culture of collaboration, sharing of expertise and creating local and regional networks to improve the educational and life chances of children and young people.

Northern Alliance RIC vision: Developing a culture of collaboration, sharing of expertise and creating local and regional networks to improve the educational and life chances of children and young people.

Prìomh fhianais a tha a' stiùireadh ar plana

Key areas of evidence informing our plan

Progress against the National Improvement Framework

- Key Performance Measures
- Progress in achieving NIF priorities in 2023-24

Key Performance Measures (KPM) 2023-24 and targets for 2024-25

In addition to the Core and Core+ Stretch Aims set out in part two of our National Improvement Framework documents, the Comhairle has identified a number of KPM to support Standards & Quality reporting and to inform future improvement planning prioritisation. It must be noted that these measures should be considered together with the stretch aims to provide a full picture of performance over time.

The measures come from a variety of sources including local priorities, the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. A summary of the rationale for each measure is provided in appendix one.

#	Measure	2023-24 Baseline	2024-25 Target
1	Enrolment in Gaelic Medium P1	42.0%	50.0%
2a	Schools Evaluated as Good or Better QI 1.3 – Leadership of Change	77.3%	80.0%
2b	Schools Evaluated as Good or Better QI 2.3 – Learning, Teaching & Assessment	77.3%	80.0%
2c	Schools Evaluated as Good or Better QI 3.1 – Improving Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion	68.2%	80.0%
2d	Schools Evaluated as Good or Better QI 3.2 – Raising Attainment & Achievement	77.3%	80.0%
3a	Attainment in the Broad General Education Literacy & Gàidhlig Combined	85.6%	87.0%
3b	Attainment in the Broad General Education Literacy & English Combined	82.8%	85.0%
3c	Attainment in the Broad General Education Mathematics/Numeracy	82.2%	85.0%
4a	Attainment in National Qualifications National 5	82.3%	84.0%
4b	Attainment in National Qualifications Higher	71.9%	73.0%
5	Achievement of 5+ Awards at Level 6 (Leavers)	29.2%	30.0%
6	Achievement of SCQF5 Awards in Literacy & Numeracy (Leavers)	60.4%	61.5%
7	The Poverty-Related Attainment Gap in the BGE	18.2%	16.5%

8a	Participation Measure Leavers in Education	65.4%	66.0%
8b	Participation Measure Leavers in Employment	30.0%	30.1%
8c	Participation Measure Leavers in Training	1.5%	1.6%
9a	School Attendance Primary	93.6%	94.6%
9b	School Attendance Secondary	88.5%	90.0%

The summarised progress against the NIF for 2023-24 is presented below.

Progress against the national priorities 2023-24

National Priority	Summary
Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education	<p>Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is the main framework used to support pupil leadership and voice within our schools. The Award is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. RRSA is now being implemented in 100% of our schools, with five gold award school, six silver award schools and four bronze award schools. Schools involved in the Rights Respecting Schools Award work towards the recognition that they have embedded children’s and young people’s rights in their school’s planning, policies, practice and ethos.</p> <p>Most schools have refreshed their vision, values and aims to reflect and promote the rights of the child. We will continue to support schools to ensure the agreed vision, values and aims focuses on achieving impact for Gàidhlig.</p> <p>Education Performance Reports provided to the Education, Sport and Children’s Services Committee reference relevant UNCRC articles. Comhairle policies increasingly reference children’s rights around decision making.</p> <p>e-Sgoil was awarded grant funding in September 2023 through the Scottish Government’s UNCRC Innovation Fund. This funding supports a project where external ‘creative catalysts’ work with groups of children and young people who are most at risk of having their rights compromised and unrealised. Gaelic Medium secondary pupils from across all four Comhairle nan Eilean Siar secondary schools make up one of these groups. Final project findings and recommendations are expected early in 2025.</p>

	<p>In producing the Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood (RSHP) guidance for schools, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has had due regard to the legislative framework, statutory guidance, and, therefore, the statutory guidance on teaching RSHP. Comhairle schools give learners increasing opportunities to exercise their right to identify and express their own educational needs in relation to their RSHP education. Staff have consulted with learners and considered resources to be used in the creation of their RSHP frameworks. Schools across Lewis, Uist and Barra have created bespoke comprehensive RSHP frameworks across Early, First and Second levels. Staff work with parents where a learner has additional support needs, disability or any other specific needs to make sure that RSHP lesson content is appropriate, and any required adjustments are made.</p> <p>Literacy and numeracy and mathematics working groups (early to second level) have led the review and further development of our literacy and numeracy pathways. They have referenced relevant UNCRC articles in the refreshed pathways. In 2024/25, staff will embed the development, planning and teaching of the refreshed pathways which make the links to relevant articles explicit. We will continue to support children and young people as indigenous learners of the Gàidhlig language.</p>
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National Priority	Summary
Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy	<p>This year, an average of 86.8% of learners achieved or exceeded their curriculum level in numeracy and literacy combined across P1, P4, P7 and S3. When observing changes in attainment compared to that of the previous year, there is evidence of important improvements across stages and organisers. For example, in primary settings, staff continue to raise children’s attainment in Eisteachd & Labhairt Gàidhlig following successful use of interventions to reduce gaps from the pandemic.</p> <p>Across all SQA awards this year, the pass rate achieved in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar was 81.7%, from a total of 2424 presentations. Increases in pass rate and presentations mean that, this year, more young people are successfully achieving more awards. This year’s results demonstrate a strong performance overall against a context of decreasing pass rates nationally in 2024. We record an increase of 2.5% in passes at National 5 and an increase of 5.5% in those achieving Advanced Higher across all Comhairle nan</p>

Eilean Siar schools. There is, however, a reduction in the pass rate for Highers locally this year in the context of an overall reduction in passes nationally.

We will work with our secondary schools to develop a strategy to raise attainment. This will focus on improving the quality of passes at Level 5 and Level 6, increasing presentation levels in some subject areas, particularly Gaelic, and raising attainment for the lowest attaining 20% of young people.

In 2023/24, most primary schools engaged in a National Improving Writing Programme with the Scottish Government Children & Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC). This programme focused on improving writing attainment at first and second level. Senior leaders report a positive impact on writing attainment at first level. Across Comhairle primary settings, 35% more learners achieved first level in writing than was predicted. In 2024/25, all staff who are trained in the programme will continue to implement the quality improvement methodology of CYPIC. Local leads will support the implementation of this programme across all Comhairle primary schools. Following on from the success of CYPIC across our Comhairle schools, several of our Gaelic Medium teachers have been asked to engage as a case study of good practice. This is to support other schools across Scotland to take forward CYPIC from the context of Gaelic Medium Education.

Senior leaders and class teachers have benefited from opportunities for strategic development and professional learning. This ensures that school-based professional experience drives change and improvement at a strategic level. A successful example is the literacy and numeracy and mathematics working groups (early to second level) who have led the review and further development of our literacy and numeracy pathways and associated professional learning opportunities. The implementation of the pathways is resulting in improvements in learner experiences and increased expectations for progression in literacy and numeracy. Executive headteachers delivered professional learning to teachers in the areas of pace, challenge and assessment at the planning stages. This was identified in inspections in our schools by Education Scotland. We will continue to embed our refreshed pathways to improve further the quality of the experiences we provide for our learners.

	<p>The Comhairle’s Quality Assurance Policy has been refreshed in line with national expectations and in respect of duties upon Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar to secure the continuing improvement of education in our schools. The policy sets out the Comhairle’s principles and procedures in doing so with the intention of creating consistent and coherent practice across all our settings. The Central Education Team will support the implementation of this policy across all Comhairle schools to ensure learners experience high-quality learning and teaching.</p> <p>The Central Education Team have led on a programme of school quality assurance visits focusing on learning, teaching and assessment and Mathematics. These visits have provided opportunities for school based and central staff at all levels to develop experience and knowledge around self-evaluation for self-improvement. Quality assurance teams have included Education Scotland staff such as our Attainment Advisor. This professional learning has enhanced professional networks and the quality of self-evaluation in individual schools and central teams. The Central Education Team has planned an ambitious programme of universal and targeted support in schools to support ongoing improvement. This will support further aspects of individual schools' evaluation of improvement in the areas of Gàidhlig, pace, challenge and differentiation, and leadership of change.</p> <p>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar was well represented at the Deasbad Nàiseanta nan Àrd-sgoiltean (the National Gaelic Schools Debate) 2023. Pupils from Sir E Scott triumphed as the winners. The Debate is an important event on the national Gaelic and Cultural diary as it engages secondary pupils who study Gaelic throughout the country. It provides an exceptional opportunity for young Gaelic speakers to use their linguistic and debating skills on both regional and national platforms.</p> <p>A working party was established to create a tracking and monitoring system that would be utilised across all primary schools in the authority. The tracking document will replace the current systems across all primaries and ensure there is a consistent approach to gathering and tracking data. The refreshed literacy and numeracy progression pathways are linked to the system. This will allow senior leaders to moderate, and quality assure data. The tracking and monitoring system is nearing completion and will be in operation from January 2025.</p>
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	<p>Early years' staff have improved and developed the Gaelic developmental overviews to support better Gaelic learning. They have embedded the overviews in our Gaelic medium early years' settings, using them to assess children's language development against the developmental milestones. Staff are improving the tracking of language acquisition, as a result. They are using the overviews well to support them to plan targeted interventions to further improve children's Gaelic language acquisition.</p>
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National Priority	Summary
<p>Closing the attainment gap between the most and least advantaged children and young people</p>	<p>Schools in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar access and use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF); grant funding distributed annually as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Senior leaders and staff use a range of indicators to identify learners in their school who may benefit from targeted interventions and approaches, with the aim of reducing the poverty-related attainment gap. Moving forward, senior leaders should ensure that staff, parents and learners are actively involved in determining the focus of the PEF spend for their school.</p> <p>The impact of poverty on attainment is considered by comparing the attainment of children and young people registered for FSM and those not registered. It is important to note that low cohort numbers for FSM can disproportionately affect statistical data. Based on FSM data, the aggregated attainment gap for this classification is 18.2% in 2023-24.</p> <p>Cohort sizes for PEF within subjects in each year group are small and can vary from 40 pupils in the largest classification down to two in the smallest. This can result in significant variations in data when expressed as percentages. Collectively across literacy and numeracy, the attainment gap between learners in receipt of PEF compared to those that were not, was 25.8%. The attainment gap for last year's P1, P4, P7 and S3 was 21.4%, indicating that factors relating to poverty significantly impact on attainment and that the gap locally has widened in the last year.</p> <p>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands are developing an island poverty index to improve the educational and life chances of our children and young people through collaboration. As small authorities with predominantly rural low-density population, it is challenging to use the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as</p>

a meaningful and reliable measure of the impact of poverty on attainment and achievement. The purpose of the Island Poverty Index is to provide a robust rationale of schools that are similar across the three islands. This is to improve collaborative working between these schools.

Individual schools have evidenced the impact of their PEF spend in their own school improvement plans. Discrete PEF plans are now included within school improvement plans which is supporting further self-evaluation. Senior leaders track and monitor pupils in receipt of PEF. New guidelines to support the efficacy and evaluation of PEF spending will be issued to schools in session 2024-25. This will support schools to ensure decisions about which learners would benefit most from any particular intervention or approach, whilst keeping a clear focus on delivering equity through improving outcomes for learners impacted by poverty. We will continue to support our secondary schools to ensure robust monitoring and tracking of individual learners and specific groups (FSM and care-experienced). This will evidence better the impact of interventions on attainment and achievement.

Transition planning is embedded within the Comhairle's policies and procedures for additional support needs and the more universal policies and procedures for support for children and young people. These transitions include entry to pre-school provision, transfer to primary school and through the different stages of primary and secondary school and to post-school provision. Timely planning is a key priority for our settings to ensure continuity and progression as well as effective collaboration and liaison between schools, parents, learners and other agencies.

Summer activities are offered to our most disadvantaged through the Education Attainment Apprentices and the Care Experienced Children and Young People coordinator. They give children and young people the opportunity to experience a range of activities. Evaluations evidence that children partake in the activities eagerly and enthusiastically.

Using Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels data, Stornoway Primary School identified a need to focus on raising attainment in writing, specifically for a group of learners who were in receipt of free school meals or supported by pupil equity funding (PEF). As a result, raising attainment in writing at all stages featured on the School Improvement Plan. The school applied for a grant from the local authority Strategic Equity Fund to employ both an

	<p>English Medium teacher and a Gaelic Medium teacher for one day a week, over two terms, to provide additional literacy teaching input for an identified group of 46 learners. The aim of these additional teaching sessions was to develop literacy skills, specifically in writing; enabling learners to make progress towards their expected levels and reduce the poverty-related attainment gap. The ACEL data demonstrated an increase of 6 percentage points (pp) in Gaelic writing attainment and an increase of 10pp in English writing attainment across P1, P4 and P7. At the start of the project, 33% of the group were on track to achieve their expected levels. After the intervention, this had increased to 56% of pupils on track to achieve. This was an overall increase of 23%.</p>
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National Priority	Summary
<p>Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Almost all Comhairle schools have worked with learners, parents/carers and partners to identify what is working well and what needs to improve to support children and young people's health and wellbeing (HWB). In session 2023-24, the Comhairle provided RSHP guidance for schools to support the development of RSHP. Working groups were set up for Lewis & Harris and Uist and Barra to take forward the development of programmes for schools in these areas. Schools across Lewis, Uist and Barra have created bespoke comprehensive RSHP frameworks across Early, First and Second levels. Feedback to date is overwhelmingly positive and the Uist primaries have been contacted by other local authorities asking us to share their approach. Senior leaders in Harris are in consultation with parents/carers to take forward the development of a RSHP programme for their schools. Senior leaders will continue to undertake a range of activities involving learners, staff, parents/carers and partners in developing our RSHP programmes to third and fourth level.</p> <p>The Comhairle's Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy (March 2024) was developed to provide a consistent approach across Comhairle schools and early years settings. Through professional learning at our annual centre-based in-service day, senior leaders were supported to use the information and guidance within the Comhairle policy to develop positive relationships policies within their settings. There is currently variation between and within schools and early years settings in the approaches used to support children's well-being and promote positive behaviour. We will continue to support senior leaders and</p>

staff on embedding consistently high-quality relationship-based approaches in schools.

With contributions from the Strategic Equity Fund, a partnership has been developed with 'The Shed' a local community youth project to provide youth workers that engage with young people within our largest secondary school and then extend that in you their youth centre in the evening. This work has provided emotional support and guidance to young people experiencing poverty to be more included, to have broader social and community experiences and to engage more in school.

The Shed project has also focused on providing transition support for pupils experiencing poverty and disadvantage through guided activity in their last term in P7, bridging activities as they progress into secondary and a period of continuing support at the beginning of S1. This has helped to ensure these vulnerable young people have had a positive and supported start to secondary school and reduced risk of early disengagement after transition.

Uist Primaries, Sgoiltean-Àraich and Sgoil Lionacleit created a Transition Policy to strengthen links and enable smooth and seamless transitions between settings. Senior leaders have created a detailed P7 to S1 transition calendar that outlines planned events.

The Grimsay Boat Shed transition session is an effective exemplar showing how secondary and primary school staff worked collaboratively with community partners to increase learner participation and engagement during the primary-secondary transition process. The workshop allowed the children to build positive friendships across the four Uist Primaries. They worked with museum staff, artists/crafts specialists and senior pupils to design and create objects and learn traditional skills. The children had to discuss the relevance of heritage crafts today and how these can be shared, learnt and embraced to help us live more sustainably. At the end of the workshop the children were encouraged to visit the unique heritage centre with friends and family.

The Comhairle has incorporated preventative and proactive support for families and professionals through consultation and direct training delivery. This has included work with Western Isles Counselling Services, Relationships Scotland, Action for Children, See Me See Change and Kooth.

	<p>More specific training is also delivered regularly on topics such as mental health awareness, Prevent, Loss and Bereavement, Keeping Trauma in Mind, Nurture, and Compassionate and Connected Communities.</p> <p>NHS Western Isles Health professionals and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Educational Psychologists and Education managers have created a draft Neurodevelopmental Pathway to support staff, parents/carers and learners have a clearer understanding on the pathway. The draft neurodevelopmental pathway details the assessment process, guidance and checklists to be followed. The pathway will be finalised and implemented across Comhairle settings.</p>
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National Priority	Summary
<p>Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people</p>	<p>The SDS Annual Participation Measure for 2024 reports that the Comhairle has the third highest participation rate across Scotland at 96.8%. Furthermore, Comhairle schools continue to report some of the highest success rates in Scotland for sustained post-school destinations, with 98.3% of our leavers continuing to be in a positive destination three months after leaving school, another increase on last year of 1.3%.</p> <p>The Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Schools Co-ordinators support schools and the DYW Outer Hebrides Programme to develop and implement a programme of employer engagement. This programme is aimed at enhancing the curriculum as well as the wider Scottish Government Policy objectives such as delivering the Young Person Guarantee.</p> <p>The DYW School Co-ordinator supports senior leaders to embed the DYW Strategy and other employer offers within the curriculum. They create and implement a structure for employer engagement which reflects the school DYW plan and maintain a robust network of partners within the local business community. In so doing the DYW School Co-ordinator supports the school leadership team in fulfilling national priorities around employability, enterprise, Career Education Standards and Work Placement Standards.</p> <p>DYW live partnership between employers and organisations from around Scotland is delivered by e-Sgoil and Education Scotland. DYW Live provides live online learning that supports learners' development of employability skills,</p>

career pathways and industry connections, bringing industry experts and employers directly into the classroom via live and online sessions. The Comhairle will encourage schools to engage further with DYW live.

Comhairle schools are taking increasing account of the challenges learners face in entering a rapidly changing economic, technological and environmental reality when planning their future pathways. Staff work well together and with partners, to provide a range of meaningful opportunities and insights into the world of work. As a result, our learners increasingly recognise how personally and in work they can contribute to sustaining Gàidhlig language and culture. This was identified in an inspection of one of our schools by Education Scotland. Island careers fairs demonstrate increasing collaboration with partners, recognising Gaelic as an economic driver across employment sectors.

The Comhairle has implemented a range of effective approaches to sharing information among key partners to provide tailored support to young people when they leave school. Comhairle has implemented weekly interventions to ensure information within the 16+ Data Hub is current and responsive. The Comhairle recognises that it is crucial that the right support is in place for this age group as they move through each transition in education, training or employment. We have ensured effective information sharing between partners allows for quick identification and engagement with any young person who has not secured a positive destination after school, who has failed to complete a course of learning/training or who is not in employment. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar had the second highest rate of participation in employment (30%) of all local authorities. This demonstrates that supporting effective pathways into employment are impacting positively on our young people.

Foundation Apprenticeships form an offer within the senior phase of secondary education. They provide young people with the appropriate underpinning knowledge and experience to enable them to progress to employment, and modern and graduate apprenticeship programmes. Locally, Foundation Apprenticeships are closing the gap between the classroom and the workplace, with pupils realising the benefits of work-based learning.

Since 2019, the Comhairle has supported 507 pupils to undertake a Foundation Apprenticeship at SCQF level 4-6 in the following areas:

- Automotive

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Business Skills- Creative Digital Media- Engineering- Food & Drink Technologies- IT Software Development- Hospitality- Social Services Children and Young People- Social Services and Healthcare- Construction <p>Foundation Apprenticeships are available to senior phase pupils across all four of our secondary schools. Five of the frameworks are available through a national offer in partnership with eSgoil and iSgoil.</p> <p>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar values the successful collaboration with UHI North, West and Hebrides in the delivery of S2 electives. We recognise the benefit of developing applied learning and employability skills through partnerships linked to business and industry.</p> |
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Implementing the NIF in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar 2024-25: Objectives and Impact

NIF Priority 1

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

What do we want to achieve?	How will we make these improvements?	How will we know if we have impacted positively on learners?
<p>Embed a culture of collaboration to equip learners to lead change, influence improvement in and beyond school.</p> <p>All learners are confident to participate in decision making activities and know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon.</p> <p>All learners understand and recognise their rights and what these mean for themselves and others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure schools are utilising HGIOURS to support learner participation in self-evaluation and school improvement. • Identify and share highly effective practice in relation to meaningful learner participation. • Organise and host with MSYP a series of events with our secondary learners, with a focus on relationships. • Continue to promote Rights Respecting Schools within the context of UNCRC and GIRFEC, • Encourage leadership and empowerment of change at all levels. • Identify and share highly effective approaches within ELC settings, with a focus on capturing voice of under 5s and babies. • Review practice on capturing learners' voices with support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners will be participating in meaningful self-evaluation and school improvement. • MYSP will work alongside our secondary learners to plan and deliver a series of events. • Learners will articulate their understanding of their rights. • All schools to have achieved at least Bronze Award in Rights Respecting Schools programme. • Increase in number of learners involved in pupil leadership opportunities. • Feedback from ELC practitioners around capturing voice guidance. • Feedback from support services around capturing learners' voices.

NIF Priority 2

Improvement in Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing

What do we want to achieve?	How will we make these improvements?	How will we know if we have impacted positively on learners?
<p>Improve staff, parent/carer and learner's knowledge of mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Develop a nurturing culture and ethos across Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Education and Children's Services, schools, and early years settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver staff CLPL programme, including The Promise and Trauma Informed Practice, The Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning and Education (CIRCLE) resource, Relationships-based Practice, Dyslexia Pathways and Social Communication Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS). • The Senior Managers Conference and August 2025 Inservice will focus specifically on developing positive, nurturing relationships across the Comhairle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff who have completed training on mental health and wellbeing. • % of staff reporting improved knowledge following training. • Bring together and share highly effective inclusive practice, focusing on approaches to support the engagement and achievement of all learners. • Learners' HWB data reflects positive improvement across the schools. • Learners will have a secure understanding of how the wellbeing indicators relate to their own lives. They will discuss confidently their strengths in relation to each of the indicators. Learners with barriers to learning will use the wellbeing wheel to share their strengths and identify their needs.
<p>Develop and evaluate universal and preventative supports and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support establishments in implementing nurture and trauma informed approaches. • A pilot group of primary schools and all four 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunisation Champions will be informed about the Immunisation Programme and will have had the leadership opportunity to work alongside Allied Health Professionals.

	<p>secondaries will actively participate in the Immunisation Champions Programme led by NHS Western Isles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunisation Champions will have improved knowledge of immunisations.
<p>Deliver high-quality, evidence-based parenting programmes across our settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide effective, targeted support for identified learners and families through a range of evidenced based programmes related to supporting child development (e.g. Solihull online (0-19 Years), Triple P, Triple P for Teenagers). • Continue with the ‘Spark’ events across the Western Isles to allow parents/carers access to third sector agencies for financial and employability support, promote Gaelic Medium Education and family support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff and establishments who have completed training. • % of staff reporting improved knowledge following training. • Improved partnerships with parents/carers evidenced in feedback and increased engagement with third sector agencies.
<p>All staff promote the importance of attendance. They make learners feel valued and welcomed on their arrival in line with an ethos of positive and supportive relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh local authority attendance policy and procedures in line with National guidance. • Ensure all schools have in place policies that promote the importance of attendance and outline procedures to support the recording and management of attendance. • Deliver staff CLPL on improving attendance, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of school attendance in primary and secondary schools (All, FSM, Care Experienced). • All schools ensure the accurate recording of learner attendance and absence in accordance with Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1 (2019) • Full implementation of Comhairle policy and procedures for the promotion and

	<p>promoting Education Scotland support materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor attendance to identify patterns of individuals and groups and plan specific interventions to improve attendance. • Ensure schools have staged intervention processes in place to support attendance. Introduce termly attendance forums for all schools which will be reviewed at locality meetings. 	<p>management of attendance across all schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff reporting enhanced understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
<p>Improve recording and monitoring of bullying and prejudiced based incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh process guidance for staff on SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities module. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of bullying and prejudiced based incidents resolved using SEEMIS module. • 100% of schools using SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities module.
<p>Identify gaps in delivery of health and wellbeing curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the health and wellbeing curriculum in line with national guidance and continue to develop the RSHP Programme to extend to third and fourth level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% evaluations of good or better in Q. 3.1. Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion self-evaluation. • Develop RSHP Programme to third and fourth level.

NIF Priority 3

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

What do we want to achieve?	How will we make these improvements?	How will we know if we have impacted positively on learners?
<p>Reduce the poverty-related attainment gap and raise achievement for learners who may face disadvantage.</p> <p>Improve recording and monitoring of school attendance and engagement of learners.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for parents/carers, learners and staff to be actively involved in determining the focus of the PEF spend.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a range of indicators to identify learners who may benefit from targeted interventions and approaches. • Use planning approaches which include learning targets informed by the views of learners. • Continue to develop consistently high-quality approaches to the teaching of writing in English and Gàidhlig at first and second level through the National Improvement Writing Programme. • Conduct achievement, attainment and improvement reviews with all secondary schools with a focus on how the entirety of the curriculum can support learners' attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig at S3. • Regular monitoring of the data of learners with persistent absence and those who are at risk of having high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Literacy and Numeracy Attainment ACEL P1, 4,7 combined for learners in receipt of PEF. • Increase in literacy and numeracy attainment of school leavers. • Increase % of school attendance in primary and secondary schools (including all, FSM, Care Experienced). • Continue to increase sustained positive destinations for learners who may face disadvantage. • % of staff reporting enhanced understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to PEF.

	<p>absence (including ASN, Care Experienced, FSM, interrupted learners)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The voice of the learner and their family is used to identify causes of absence and is placed at the heart of planning co-created, targeted interventions.• Interventions are formally recorded, progress is monitored and shared regularly with learners and parents/carers.• Work with parents/carers, learners and staff to identify appropriate areas for collaboration in the allocation of PEF.• Deliver staff CLPL to support their understanding of PEF and how it will positively impact on accelerating progress towards reducing gaps in learning.• Develop effective data systems to support and inform planning for improvement in relation to equity.	
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NIF Priority 4

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

What do we want to achieve?	How will we make these improvements?	How will we know if we have impacted positively on learners?
<p>Improvement in positive destination outcomes for all, particularly those who may face disadvantage.</p> <p>Increase learners' awareness and engagement with Gàidhlig at a local and national level. Support learners in recognising how Gàidhlig may help them gain employment.</p> <p>Across Gàidhlig Learner and Medium Education, increase learners' uptake for courses leading to qualifications and awards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in closer collaboration with relevant services and partners to develop consistent approaches to destination planning. • Invite an identified cohort of learners to share their destination pathway once they have left school and for the following three-year period, utilising 16+ Participation Portal. • Co-create alternative education pathways to support those at highest risk of disengaging from education and for those impacted by poverty. (identify 'push and pull' factors) • Enhance learners' experiences and attainment through working with partners who are fluent in Gàidhlig. • Support learners' in Gàidhlig Learner and Medium Education to engage with national and local competitions and events. Increase and celebrate the recognitions of achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in aspirational positive destinations that build on learners' accrued skills and qualifications. • Increase use of destination data to ascertain quality of longer-term outcomes for learners. • Increased opportunities provided to young people e.g. Apprenticeship event, NHS offer. • Increased understanding amongst partners of appropriate post school provision. • Increased engagement with Gàidhlig Careers Fair and share testimonials from former Gàidhlig pupils. • Increase staff and learners' understanding of the importance of wider achievements through the medium of Gàidhlig on raising attainment. • More opportunities will be available for young people to undertake vocational learning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase awareness of the variety of qualifications, awards and formal recognition schemes available to learners through the medium of Gàidhlig.• Develop learners' understanding of the important meta-skills for learning, life and work they are developing.• Review labour market information and align learning experiences to future workforce opportunities in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible learning pathways will be available to young people who may face disadvantage.
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NIF Priority 5

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

What do we want to achieve?	How will we make these improvements?	How will we know if we have impacted positively on learners?
<p>High-quality learning, teaching and assessment approaches for every learner.</p> <p>High-quality total immersion and immersion approaches leading to strong fluency and well-paced progress.</p> <p>Improve attainment in numeracy across all levels.</p> <p>Improve attainment in literacy specifically in writing and literacy and Gàidhlig at S3.</p>	<p>Secondary specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct achievement, attainment and improvement reviews with all secondary schools with a focus on the overall attainment of learners. • Senior leaders should develop a strategic approach to improve literacy and numeracy as a responsibility of all across the school to support stronger attainment. • Improve progression pathways from the Broad General Education (BGE) to Senior Phase and beyond. • Develop a rationale for curriculum design with a focus on how the entirety of the curriculum can support learners' attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig at S3. • Increase the use of interdisciplinary learning (IDL) and technology to support the delivery of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a detailed 'Class at a glance' approach, staff will identify learners who have gaps in their learning and agree plans for support. • Increase in attainment in Literacy and Gàidhlig at S3. • Attainment levels in literacy and numeracy are a central feature of the school's priorities for improvement and are raising attainment. • A clear and concise rationale reflecting immersion as a key driver across the four contexts of learning. • Learners will experience consistently high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. • Staff will have clearer understanding of the immersion approaches. • All schools will have a moderation plan in place for school, cluster and Local Authority level moderation practice.

	<p>curriculum through Gàidhlig.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital delivery models used to broaden subject choice and learner pathways <p>Primary specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct achievement, attainment and improvement reviews with identified primary schools with a focus on the overall attainment of learners. • Support identified schools, following inspection visits, to take forward recommendations. • Enhance assessment and moderation approaches with a particular focus on numeracy and listening and talking in Gàidhlig. • Focused self-evaluation with schools on Quality Indicator 2.3 (Learning, Teaching and Assessment). <p>ELC specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh local authority deferral policy and procedures. • Ensure all settings have in place individualised deferral plans agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase of schools involved in Local Authority moderation. • Increased collaboration between primary and secondary staff to support the continuity of immersion in the secondary curriculum. • Self-evaluation of Learning, Teaching and Assessment for % schools are rated Good or above under the How Good is our School? indicators. • % increase in attainment in literacy and numeracy at all levels. • ELC Gàidhlig immersion toolkit data is analysed to ensure provision of targeted literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing play and learning experiences. • Increased confidence in decision making over deferrals in consultation with parents/carers and other agencies. • % increase in children’s Gàidhlig language acquisition in ELC.
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alongside parents/carers.

- Ensure consistent implementation of Gàidhlig immersion toolkit across settings.
- Pilot project in two settings focusing on the effective tracking and monitoring of Gàidhlig language acquisition.

All

- Engage with the Northern Alliance's Toolkit to support schools' self-evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Continue to identify training needs to support learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy.
- Further develop and support teacher leadership, with a particular focus on middle leadership, through a range of CLPL.
- Continue to embed sustainable approaches in the development of Gaelic Medium Education.
- Ensure all schools have a policy for high-quality learning, teaching and assessment, which includes clear

	<p>advice on Gaelic Medium Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure consistent implementation of the Comhairle Assessment, Tracking and Monitoring Guide.• Create a Comhairle nan Eilean Siar digital strategy to support staff to use technology more effectively to improve learning outcomes for learners.• Increase bespoke digital engagement with schools and continue to support the rollout of Chromebook and assisted technology training.	
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Appendix One – Key Performance Measures

The detail and descriptors for the key performance measures used in the Standards and Quality section are set out below.

	Measure	Descriptor
1	Enrolment in Gaelic Medium Education P1	Important indicator of uptake of Gaelic Medium Education and a key measure at the entry point to statutory education.
2	Schools evaluated as Good or better with HGIOS QIs	LA supported self-evaluation. Indicator of quality and improvement in schools. Broken down into four sub- measures: QI 1.3 – Leadership of Change QI 2.3 – Learning, Teaching & Assessment QI 3.1 – Improving Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion QI 3.2 – Raising Attainment & Achievement For calculation, S3 data uses Third level or better.
3	Attainment in the Broad General Education (BGE)	Data based on the annual ACEL census of attainment at P1, P4, P7 and S3. Divided into three sub-measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy and Gàidhlig combined • Literacy and English combined • Mathematics/Numeracy
4	Attainment in National Qualifications	Headline attainment of A-C passes at National 5 and Higher (all courses). An indicator of attainment in the senior phase. Sub-divides into separate measures for N5 and Higher.
5	Achievement of 5+ Awards at level 6 (leavers)	A measure to be used as an indicator of breadth and depth of achievement. Tracks percentage of leavers achieving 5+awards at SCQF6.
6	Achievement of SCQF5 Awards in Literacy & Numeracy (leavers)	Indicator of attainment in core literacy and numeracy. It measures the percentage of leavers that achieved SCQF5 awards in both literacy and numeracy.
7	The Poverty-Related Attainment Gap in the BGE	A measure of the indicative attainment gap in the BGE drawn from a collation of attainment in literacy and numeracy by the defined PEF cohort, compared to the non-PEF cohort.
8	Attainment of Care Experienced Young People	Collation of attainment data for care experienced children and young people across the BGE and senior phase. A sub-measure for each is used
9	Participation Measure – Leavers in Education, Employment or Training	An ultimate outcome measure using SDS post-school participation data. Sub measure for education, employment and training. To allow tracking of higher rates of post-school employment in the Western Isles.
10	School Attendance	Headline measure of school attendance sub-divided into primary and secondary.