



# CLD Standards Council Scotland (CLDSC)

Response submitted to consultation questions  
on

National Improvement Framework - A consultation on  
enhanced data collection for improvement

July 2022

## **Background:**

In 2021, both the OECD and Audit Scotland published reports which made recommendations relating to data collection and the need to ensure it reflects the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence. In light of these recommendations, a Consultation on NIF Measures was launched by The Scottish Government which focused on how to ensure that the basket of key measures to assess progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap reflects the wider ambitions of the curriculum. The consultation also asked questions around the value of the wider data for improvement purposes, both qualitative and quantitative, and the range of data needed by schools, education authorities and at the national level in order to fulfil their different requirements.

Launched on 9 May 2022, the consultation paper asked for views on improving the collection of education data in Scotland for improvement purposes and to assess progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

The consultation asked 10 questions around:

- How to ensure that the basket of key measures to assess progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap reflects the wider ambitions of the curriculum; and
- The value of the wider data for improvement purposes, both qualitative and quantitative, and the range of data needed by schools, education authorities and at the national level in order to fulfil their different requirements.

Following is a note of the responses that the CLD Standards Council submitted to the consultations questions deemed relevant to the CLD sector across Scotland.

## Consultation Questions and Responses

**Q: Our proposals for the key measures of progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap are based on a number of key principles. Are there any other principles that should be included?**

Poverty related attainment does not stop at the school door, but is impacted through wider achievement from children, young people (YP) and their families engagement in alternative educational opportunities within communities. In order to address it completely, we propose additional measures to recognise and acknowledge the Community Learning and Development (CLD) contribution through adult/family/youth learning. Community Learning and Development Standards Council (CLDSC) recognise the commitment and work throughout CLD provision to supporting closing the attainment gap, which continues with YP past the key school ages. There is a need for more robust data gathering to ensure local authority reporting feeds directly into the NIF indicators and includes CLD practice which extends beyond the 3 - 18 age groups.

CLDSC would like to see more recognition of the CLD contribution to NIF through links with adult education, family learning and working with young people from CfE and GIRFEC, so that these areas are measured and acknowledged.

CLDSC are also critically aware that there are many other factors which impact on attainment beyond a narrow lens of poverty related attainment. There needs to be work done as part of the NIF refresh to develop comprehensive data to inform the other factors for lower attainment amongst families where poverty impacts are less felt, such as children's and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

**Q: Should the two sub-measures covering attendance and exclusion at secondary schools be promoted to key measures?**

CLDSC suggest that attendance and exclusion should perhaps be separated.

- **Exclusion:** We strongly believe that if YP are not in school or an educational environment they cannot learn, however EIS have noted concerns regarding children with the worst behaviour who, if kept in school, may cause risk to others (staff and pupils).
- **Attendance:** Attendance is a complex issue for families and pupils ranging from health related matters to chaotic or disruptive home life, care duties or community life, and other barriers including poverty which impact their attendance.

Where is the young person's right to choose? There needs to be further investment, recognition and measurement regards alternative engagements for learning (for example CLD youth work and third sector agencies) who can offer a more tailored learning package for those who have any barriers regarding attending school, in alternative locations or online. These could still be SQA and other recognised qualifications such as ASDAN. With the recent developments regarding improved provision of online learning, instead of using the historic language of "exclusion" from school, perhaps YP whose behaviour or actions may be a concern within the school environment could be offered new alternatives such as "out of school" options where online learning can be accessed, so they can continue with their school curriculum. This could be at home, college hub, third sector agency or within a CLD setting in the community where they would be given additional support to develop new strategies and improve behaviour, which would support future attendance and work towards raising attainment. CLD practitioners are already working with excluded young people or those with lower attendance levels, this needs recognition in the NIF indicators.

Legality: Is there still a serious sanction around attendance? How does this link to the education act and requirement on parents to have their children attend school?

School attendance accounts for approx. 20% of a YP's week. CLDSC feel that recognising and acknowledging in the NIF indicators how children & young people spend the remainder of their week is important - CLD for example providing learning and development opportunities that support achievement and accreditation.

**Q: Should data on confidence, resilience, and engagement from the new Health and Wellbeing census be included in the basket of measures?**

No. The Health and Wellbeing census has not been universally accepted by authorities throughout Scotland and CLDSC have concerns that the low return rates so far will give a unfair, unbalanced or ill-informed data. Whilst we fully understand why it may be felt that it is important to include these items – CLDSC want to highlight the importance of considering how these are best evidenced and ensure the full understanding of the reasons behind any potential evidence or any caveats is acknowledged.

CLDSC believe the challenge of robust data collection and analysis of this information poses real concern. Following are a few questions and comments CLDSC have regarding this census and data collected.

- What information does the new Health and Wellbeing census tell us against attainment rates? Will the census information be perception based or evidence based?
- Does the census data only capture school based activity or will the evidence sources gathered and reported by CLD staff in the authority and in voluntary sector partner CLD organisations and agencies, be included to better reflect the full learning and development journey of children and young people?

- Is there other data sources through partners such as health - that can better reflect/evidence these areas?
- Adolescence is so complex, so how do you get a base line for Health and Wellbeing measurement. YP's confidence and resilience varies with individuals growth and development. Is there a general trajectory and how do we know, how can it be measured?
- There may be measureable data, for example the take up or waiting lists for CAMHs and other health and wellbeing (H&W) services/agencies, however CLDSC believe that this could also be questionable data. We are fully aware that many YP and families who need health support do not refer or engage with services for reasons such as they know it is not available for years, the stigma attached or because of accessibility and support from within their families.
- Could extra curricula activities, through school, CLD, uniformed organisations or third sector be tracked and measured regards the H&W of young people, specifically looking at sustained engagement, building skills, keeping healthy physically and mentally.

There has already been so much resource and research into the success off, and the wellbeing and happiness of adult learners, especially the older age groups who have shown that sustained engagement in extra curricula activities has positive impacts on their H&W. Perhaps using similar processes regards sustained engagement could give a good indicator of H&W, confidence and resilience in YP, however it is critical that we remember these skills are not finite, and peak and wain throughout the full span of individuals lives.

CLDSC would also like to highlight that resilience and confidence programmes are needed to support parents, carers and wider families in order to be impactful and support sustained engagement, and the role of CLD practitioners can be especially relevant to this indicator.

**Q: At the moment, the measure of achievement in the senior phase is the National Qualifications achieved by young people at the point which they leave school (SCQF levels 4, 5, and 6 – 1 or more on leaving school). Do we need to add other measures to cover wider achievement and attainment?**

CLDSC feel strongly that there is a need to recognise that achievement and accreditation is not only through SQA. Where do we measure and report on the impacts that volunteering makes on young people - this is not accredited or certified by SQA or other award bodies. The CLD sector supports a range of accreditation and achievement award programmes. The Awards Network is a useful tool.

<http://www.awardsnetwork.org/>

Option 2 would be the preferred option from a CLD practice perspective, however both options read as very similar and it is not immediately clear where the difference rests.

CLDSC feel it is essential that NIF recognises and measures attainment that is not just accredited or certificate based, for example engagement in clubs, youth groups etc, as well as alternative learning, volunteering. It is also important to remember that not all achievements, volunteering etc is certificated.

**Q: In terms of measuring progress beyond school, should the percentage of school leavers going to a “positive destination” on leaving school be included alongside the participation measure?**

What is a positive destination? The Scottish Government (SG) states: “School leavers who are engaged in higher education, further education, training, voluntary work, employment or activity agreements are classified as having a ‘positive destination’”. CLDSC offer that a more in-depth, detailed definition about what positive destinations are is required. CLD agencies and practitioners offer significant learning and development programmes that are currently not being recognised as positive destinations. Some YP may leave school and attend a CLD provision and that will not be measured or recorded as a “positive destination”, yet they will attend the CLD youth centre every day, and be engaging in projects and programmes which have individuals learning and personal development as their core objectives, enabling YP to grow towards accessing further education, work, volunteering or apprenticeships.

SG definition currently states “Voluntary work”. CLDSC would like it noted that it is not voluntary work, but just volunteering. Reconsidering how this is described will allow for inclusion of CLD activity with the reporting programme. This is critical that we recognise it is not always about volunteering to get into a job, and clearly state that volunteering is not unpaid work. Young people often volunteer in their community through informal activity supported by CLD practitioners in the voluntary sector or local authority. It does not have to be built around set 'work' outcomes.

**Q: What more do we need to do in order to ensure that a wider range of measures are in use across the education system, and that they are valued as equally as traditional attainment measures?**

- Recognise the impact of the CLD sector and related interventions from qualified practitioners to have an influence on tackling these additional measures (H&WB for example)
- Recognise that learning and educational development is not only school based. Significant amounts of learning and educational achievement is happening in communities through CLD programmes delivered by local authority CLD teams and voluntary sector CLD organisations.
- Utilise the data from other agencies. LDSC would like to enquire as to how well are we using School, CLD and College HMI data to record and support attainment measures?

- Stop using the term 'key data' - all data is relevant and of importance. By focusing only on what is considered 'key data' means missing other important information/trends. It is about reporting on that with parity of esteem to all the data.
- Recognition of where the non-school led achievement/attainment happens is vital in order to encourage greater data sharing with partner organisations in the voluntary CLD sector and local authority CLD teams.
- Ensuring that all measures are recorded in a robust and reliable format
- Learner voice and involvement should be considered as an evidence source. With young people contributing to the indicators and not just a systems collection approach. UNCR article 29 "I have the right to an education which develops my personality, respect for others' rights and the environment". It is vital we recognise that a child or YP's education should help develop their mind, body and talents so they can be the best they can. UNCR Article 12 "I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously" reminds us that children and YP have the human right to have opinions and for these opinions to be heard and taken seriously, this is fundamental when it comes to their involvement and measurement of their learning journeys. Can YP, especially in senior phases, influence the recording of their wider achievements and engagements?
- It is not just about recording the high achieving, but equally weighting the positivity to the alternative achievements, wider achievements and engagement, especially around how many parents/carers and families are engaged, how many take up the family learning offers and what reach does that have.
- How do we value non-traditional data sets? A concern CLDSC has is to the use of Insight, as currently this system accredits the school with the achievement even though the local CLD team or voluntary sector is the deliverer of that work and that is where learning has taken place, so the recognition is going ultimately to the wrong provider. Therefore, in terms of future investment often, when the school is credited for that work, the school receives the money for continuation of that non-school based activity, therefore the agencies, CLD or voluntary sector can no longer continue to deliver the programme as they do not have the funds to continue what is recognised as a successful programme.

**Q: Are the existing wider data collections, and the new data developments enough to ensure that the National Improvement Framework reflects the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence, national policy priorities such as health and wellbeing and confidence, and key priorities for COVID-19 recovery and improvement, as recommended by Audit Scotland?**

Use HMI data, it is rich regarding what it already knows concerning the Scottish education system across all age ranges. We need to stop putting weight on what just school inspection data, and use wider data such as CLD and communities HMI data.

CLDSC believe that MIS platforms need to reflect and link at all levels of the education and learning system.

**Q: How can we make better use of data to focus and drive improvement activity at school, local, regional and national level?**

As previously noted, connect with data already there, use CLD inspection data as a lot already covers the 4 capacities

**Q: How can we make better use of data to help reduce variation in outcomes achieved by young people in different parts of the country?**

Is this about reducing the number of outcomes overall or reducing the differences in outcome progress? Why does variation need to be reduced, is it more/less outcomes or about the quality of the outcomes?

QIO focus in local authorities and perhaps there is a consideration around the need to have a holistic education and learning focus - not just schools focus.

Scottish Education, the landscape of data captured is vast between schools let alone between regions and then nationwide. If not every authority is capturing the same data, then CLDSC suggest that Scottish Government consider investing in a single, robust recording system, that all LA's, through their funding agreements, are required to use. CLDSC also suggest that alongside this, clear and concise guidance is needed so LA's/Schools know exactly what data is required and why.

Perhaps this investment made into QIO's services, quality improvements and data capturing systems, would stop allowing authorities to use alternative systems and therefore eradicate the capture of data that does not correlate, ultimately improving measurement nationwide. Having one MIS platform, that was not able to be "altered" by individual authorities, and that included input and data capturing from CLD, Ed Psych, and even public health data, would support the progress of education for all ages across Scotland.