

## Why is this issue important?

The level of education that a person achieves is an important contributing factor for future health. Strong relationships between health outcomes and levels of education can be seen in the rates of death and illness in adults for a wide range of health conditions.<sup>1</sup> Education impacts on health through a complex interaction of material, psychosocial and behavioural pathways. For example, education shapes employment opportunities and income which, in turn, influences where an individual can afford to live. People with lower levels of education are less likely to have access to resources that are important for health, such as social support, a healthy physical environment and warm, safe housing.<sup>2</sup>

## Are there inequalities to consider?

Children's educational attainment is strongly influenced by their parents' income, education and socioeconomic position. In general, children from poorer families have poorer educational outcomes compared to those from more affluent families.<sup>3</sup> While these associations are not unique to the UK, differences in Scotland are marked, starting before children begin school and persisting throughout.<sup>4</sup> Educational attainment data show that in Scotland around three in five young people leave school with at least one Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 6 qualification; however, this drops to around only two in five in the most deprived areas in Scotland.<sup>5</sup> Young people who are care-experienced are less likely to leave school with a qualification than those who have not.<sup>5</sup>

## Challenges and solutions

- The **Scottish Attainment Challenge** aims to achieve equity in educational outcomes, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Scottish Government has committed £750 million over the course of the current parliament (2016–2021) to close the poverty-related attainment gap for pupils from the most deprived areas. This includes £120 million of Pupil Equity Funding, which benefits every council area in Scotland and is allocated directly to schools. Allocations are based on the number of pupils from Primary 1 to S3 who are eligible and registered for free school meals,<sup>\*</sup> with schools receiving around £1,200 per pupil.
- Education Scotland have developed a framework of '**Interventions for Equity**' to help guide the decisions of school leaders.

## Examples of positive action

Examples of positive action can be found on the **Interventions for Equity** section of Education Scotland's website. Additional examples are added on a regular basis.

## Main indicators<sup>†</sup>

- School leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF Level 4 (CYP).
- Looked after school leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF Level (CYP).
- School leavers with one or more qualification at SCQF Level 6 (CYP, HWB).
- School leavers living in the most deprived quintile with one or more qualification at SCQF Level (CYP).

## Linked indicators

- Secondary school attendance (CYP, HWB).
- Secondary school attendance by looked after children (CYP).

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<sup>\*</sup> For eligibility criteria see Scottish Government, **Free School Meals**.

<sup>†</sup> The letters in brackets indicate the profile the indicator can be found in. CYP = children and young people's profile; HWB = health and wellbeing profile.

- School exclusion rate (CYP).
- School leavers in positive destinations (CYP).
- Looked after school leavers in positive destinations (CYP).
- Employment rate for 16–24 year olds (CYP).
- Children in low-income families (CYP, HWB).
- Children registered for free school meals (CYP).
- Mean mental wellbeing score for S4 pupils (CYP).
- Mean total difficulties score for S4 (CYP).
- Proportion of S4 pupils in good or excellent general health (CYP).
- Deaths from suicide in young people (CYP).
- Working-age adults with low or no educational qualifications (HWB).
- Population income deprived (HWB).
- Working-age population employment deprived (HWB).
- Working-age population claiming Out of Work benefits (HWB).

## Resources

- NHS Health Scotland. **Children’s social circumstances and educational outcomes**; 2018.
- NHS Health Scotland. **Tackling the attainment gap by preventing and responding to adverse childhood experiences**; 2017.
- NHS Health Scotland. **Rapid evidence review: Reducing the attainment gap – the role of health and wellbeing interventions in schools**; 2017.
- Public Health England. **The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment**; 2014.
- Public Health England. **Building children and young people’s resilience in schools**; 2014.
- Education Endowment Foundation. **Putting evidence to work: a school’s guide to implementation**; 2018.
- **Evidence 4 Impact**.
- Cooper K, Stewart K. **Does money affect children's outcomes? A systematic review**. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2013.

- Cooper K, Stewart K. **Does money affect children’s outcomes? An update.** London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE; 2017.
- ScotPHO. **Children and young people: key points.**

## References

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<sup>1</sup> Higgins C, Lavin T, Metcalfe O. **Health impacts of education: A review.** Dublin: Institute of Public Health in Ireland; 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The Marmot Review. **Fair society, healthy lives: strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010.** London: The Marmot Review; 2010.

<sup>3</sup> West A. **Poverty and educational achievement: Why do children from low-income families tend to do less well at school?** *Benefits* 2007;15(3):283–97.

<sup>4</sup> Sosu E, Ellis S. **Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education.** York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Government. **Attainment and leaver destinations, supplementary data 2015/16.** Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2017.