

## Equality Impact Assessment Template – Policy, Function or Strategy

This document should be completed when a new policy, function or strategy is introduced or when a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy is recommended. This will ensure equality considerations are taken into account before a decision is made and the policy, function or strategy can be altered, if required.

<b>1. Policy, function or strategy</b>		
a.	Name/description of the policy, function or strategy <sup>1</sup>	Education Services Digital Learning Strategy 2021-2028
b.	Responsible organisation(s)/Lead Service	Education Services
c.	Lead Officer	Norman Greenshields, Education Officer
d.	Date of Impact Assessment	23/09/2021
e.	Partners/other Services involved in the development of the policy, function or strategy	Education Scotland, Libraries & Museums, Community Learning & Development, Scottish Government?
f.	Is the policy, function or strategy?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New
		<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed/Revised
g.	What is the purpose of the policy, function or strategy (include details of any new legislation which prompted the introduction of the policy, function or strategy or the substantive change to the policy, function or strategy)?	This new strategy has been identified in response to recent requirements to deliver teaching & learning remotely and through a blended learning approach, as a result of the impact of the Covid - 19 pandemic. It is also Education Services planned response to the wider Council Digital Access Strategy. A Scottish Government commitment to providing digital devices for all Primary and Secondary school learners is expected to be detailed shortly. This will require a substantive change to the way schools are set up operationally and functionally.
h.	What are the intended outcomes of the policy, function or strategy?	The main outcome is to ensure that all education establishments are able to effectively deliver, now and in the

<sup>1</sup> Please attach details of the policy, function or strategy to this Template

		future, their services and high quality teaching, learning and wellbeing support, to our children, young people and their families through the secure and efficient use of digital technology. Our educational outcome is to ensure that practitioners and learners can demonstrate the benefits of digital learning and have the skills to use and create digital solutions for learning, life and work.
i.	Geographical area (Inverclyde-wide or a specific location)	Inverclyde Wide
j.	Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy impact on?	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster good relations between people from different groups
k.	Will those who may be directly or indirectly affected by the policy, function or strategy be involved in its development?	Yes. Consultation with education establishment managers, their digital leaders, key partners, pupils and parents has been carried out throughout the development of this strategy. Care has been taken reflect their views and recent experiences in the development of the Strategy 2021-28.

<b>2. Does the policy, function of strategy impact on:</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
a. Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation ( <b>see Section 3</b> )	✓	

b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty <sup>2</sup> (see Section 6)	✓	
c. Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017/22 <sup>3</sup> (see Section 7)	✓	
d. Corporate Plan 2018/22 <sup>4</sup> (see Section 8)	✓	
<b>3. If 'Yes' is selected for any part of Section 2, please populate the other relevant Sections of this Template.</b>		
<b>4. If 'No' is selected for <u>every part</u> of Section 2, please state the reasons for this.</b>		
<p>Please sign below and email a copy of this Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy Officer: <a href="mailto:karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk">karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk</a>.</p>		
Signature:	Date:	

**3. Impact – Protected Characteristics**

<sup>2</sup> [Fairer Scotland Duty: interim guidance for public bodies](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017/22](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Corporate Plan 2018/22](#) (agenda item 5)

**Which of the Protected Characteristics will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?**

Protected Characteristic	Impact					Reasons/Comments
	Positive High	Low	Neutral	Negative High	Low	
Age	✓					The commitment to widening access to digital devices and increasing opportunities digital learning will impact on all ages of children from those in an Early Level setting through to those in the Senior phase of secondary school. More use of digital devices at home will also impact upon our families more widely and has the potential to further widen access to adult education moving forward.
Disability	✓					The strategy identifies a need to provide tailored devices for those with identified disabilities. Education Services has always provided specialist digital devices and software applications through identification of needs shared through the Additional Support Needs forum. Care will be taken to ensure that there is not a one size fits all solution when providing access to digital devices.
Gender Reassignment			✓			
Marriage and civil partnership			✓			
Pregnancy and maternity			✓			
Race		✓				Improving access to digital devices for pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds provides opportunities for our learners to communicate to others their experiences and identity. It can also strengthen our children and young people's awareness of the multicultural world that we live in. Use of digital applications such as reading progression, immersive reader, language translation etc. within their learning, can assist students from

						different racial and language backgrounds to build upon their individual skillsets and overcome barriers to learning.
Religion and belief		✓				Increasing access to digital technology allows all children to include a greater global dimension to their learning. The understanding and sharing of information around faith and religion can help our children and young people to explore and share their belief and culture more easily with their peers.
Sex			✓			
Sexual orientation			✓			
Other groups to consider • Carers	✓					As part of our response to the recent challenges of the pandemic, young carers have been identified as a group where access to digital learning at home can assist with the pressures they feel in meeting home learning demands from school.

<b>4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Foster good relations between people from different groups

## 5. Impact – groups

From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.

### Positive impacts

+

#### **School aged children in the most socio economic challenged communities.**

Equality of access to digital learning opportunities through an increase in access to digital devices in schools and at home.

#### **All learners in our educational establishments**

Every child in early learning and childcare (ELC) establishments will be impacted by increased involvement in digital learning opportunities, directly linked to Outdoor learning and Play Pedagogy.

Every pupil in Primary and Secondary school will be able to access learning on digital devices through the provision of individual digital devices by the Scottish Government.

Teaching staff will be able through the completion of the whiteboard replacement programme to deliver the same high quality teaching and learning experiences to all learners.

The pilot project around the remote classroom mentioned in the strategy is designed to explore ways schools can widen their curriculum offer both to those pupils absent/disengaged from school and also those wishing to be involved in consortia arrangements. This pilot potentially could increase access to course options through the delivery of remote learning from their base school.

### Negative impacts

-

*(Describe groups affected.)*

#### **School aged children in the most socio economic challenged communities.**

The challenges around providing high levels of connectivity to all at home will continue to be evident. This may be resolved as part of the Scottish Government commitment to providing devices for all learners in Primary and Secondary school.

Inverclyde Education Services is however committed as part of the wider council digital access strategy to extending access to free internet connectivity for learners within our schools, libraries and community centres.

**Staff**

Teaching staff and identified key administrative and pastoral care support staff will have the ability to be able to work more flexibly outside of our education buildings and more responsively in emergency or lockdown situations.

**Families**

The changes to our Microsoft 365 tenancy will allow us to better link and communicate with families directly online. This will help us to deliver programmes of family learning in more flexible and effective ways.

**Service Partners and external agencies**

The strategy provides opportunities for services and partners to be able to collaborate and communicate more effectively.

## 6. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will this policy, function or strategy have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage?

<b>Positive impact</b> +	<b>Neutral impact</b> =	<b>Negative impact</b> -
✓		

**Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.**

Education services is already continuing to identify pupils who may experience socio-economic disadvantage and who require access to digital devices to support their learning. This strategy aims to provide ways for learners to be able to access their digital resources and free internet, out with the school day, within their school buildings and other premises in communities to further support their learning. This will ultimately help support the improved attainment of these pupils and help close the attainment gap.



## 7. Impact – LOIP 2017/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the LOIP 2017/22 will this policy, function or strategy impact on?

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. <b>Population:</b> Inverclyde's population will be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio - economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth
✓	2. <b>Inequalities:</b> There will be low levels of poverty and deprivation and the gap between the richest and poorest members of our communities will be reduced (This may already have been highlighted at Section 6.)
✓	3. <b>Environment, culture and heritage:</b> Inverclyde's environment, culture and heritage will be protected and enhanced to create a better place for all Inverclyde residents and an attractive place in which to live, work and visit
✓	4. <b>The local economy:</b> Inverclyde has a thriving and diverse local economy, economic activity is increased and skills development enables both those in work and those furthest from the labour market to realise their full potential

**Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the LOIP Priority/Priorities.**

The Strategy 2021-28 will support delivery of LOIP Priorities 2, 3 and 4.

Skills development is very much identified as part of our digital learning strategy. The World Economic Forum report on [The future of Jobs](#), identified the top 10 key employment skills which will be required by people come 2025. These highlighted the importance of digital skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills for employment in the near future. This strategy will focus on upskilling both staff and pupils to raise awareness of and confidence in these aspects.

## 8. Impact – Corporate Plan 2018/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the Corporate Plan 2018/22 will the policy, function or strategy impact on?

✓	1. To promote Inverclyde, to both residents and visitors alike, as a great place to live, work and visit
✓	2. To work collaboratively, to enable strong, connected and empowered communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, so that residents have influence and control over the things that matter to them
☐	3. To grow the local economy in a way that creates opportunities for all our residents, including access to good quality jobs
✓	4. To reduce the prevalence of poverty and, in particular, child poverty in our communities
✓	5. To safeguard, support and meet the needs of our most vulnerable families and residents
✓	6. To improve the health and wellbeing of residents so that people live well, and for longer
☐	7. To protect and enhance our natural and built environment
☐	8. To preserve, nurture and promote Inverclyde's unique culture and heritage
✓	9. To deliver services that are responsive to community needs and are underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources
✓	10. To develop motivated, trained and qualified employees who deliver quality services that meet current and anticipated service needs

### **Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the Corporate Plan Priority/Priorities.**

The Strategy 2021-28 supports the delivery of a number of the Corporate Plan 2018/22 Priorities.

This strategy ultimately impacts on the way our educational establishments are setup to help support children's learning in the future. It helps modernise the digital infrastructure across our education estate enabling our ELC establishments and schools to be better able to promote learning and working in a digital age. It also enables them to work be more responsive and adaptable to change. Our staff and learners will be able to work more flexibly and collaboratively.

It supports both innovation and creativity in teaching and learning and will enable schools to focus upon improvement and more efficient operational management. The strategy provides a mechanism for reviewing, monitoring and modernising our current digital estate and the technical support system that underpins it.

## 9. Evidence

What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the policy, function or strategy?

Note: Evidence could include information from consultations, surveys, the Citizens' Panel, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, Officers' knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, and local and national groups.

Evidence	Details
<p>Consultation/Engagement (including any carried out while developing the policy, function or strategy)</p>	<p>Extensive consultation/engagement took place on the development of the Strategy 2021-28.</p> <p>Engagement with Education Scotland on Digital improvement planning and strategy creation.</p> <p>Head teachers and senior managers of every secondary school and identified Primary Schools were asked to submit their views on the proposed whiteboard replacement programme.</p> <p>All of our establishment managers, school ICT coordinators, PEF Digital Literacy teachers and Digital Champions groups were also involved in identifying and discussing all aspects of the strategy as it was being compiled. Partners from our libraries and CLD services were also part of the working group identified to help strengthen and reflect the wider council approaches in supporting family learning.</p> <p>Pupils from all Primary and Secondary schools were invited to be part of the consultation process. The Education officer spoke with groups of pupils from P4 – S6 in the course of the creation of the strategy. These discussions reflected their thoughts on aspects such as access to</p>

	<p>devices, difficulties with connectivity, their experiences and challenges in using technology throughout the Covid lockdown periods and the range and quality of support and advice that was available to them from our schools.</p> <p>Pupils had varied opinions on the idea of devices being required more frequently in classrooms and all reflected the need for more specific training, if this was to be the case. They also spoke about the type of devices which may be given and the security implications of bringing these to and from school.</p> <p>Students who were loaned devices over the course of the last session, were confident that this had changed their experiences and their engagement with their learning tasks whilst at home. Senior students indicated that the digital devices had been essential to the completion of their coursework.</p> <p>Pupils also reflected that for some, their personal engagement in learning improved through the use of online learning strategies and with the increased flexibility given for the completion of home learning tasks. The use of Teams allowed them to easily submit coursework tasks and pupils reflected that the direct online engagement with teachers was extremely beneficial to their wellbeing and learning.</p> <p>Parents were consulted through the online Parent Council representatives meeting. They welcomed the work being done to provide more online support and resources for family learning.</p>
Research	<p>When developing the Strategy 2021-28, Officers researched a number of relevant information sources, including:</p> <p>Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland   Policy drivers   Policy for Scottish education   Scottish education system   Education Scotland</p> <p>Fife Education Services digital learning strategy South East Improvement Collaborative Digital Needs Assessment</p>

	<p>Highlands Council digital device for pupils strategy  Digital improvements being implemented across the West Partnership, in the Borders, Dumfries &amp; Galloway and Midlothian.  Digital support and technical management: Microsoft/Promethean/XMA.</p>
Officers' knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)	<p>The Education Officer responsible for compiling this strategy has been the ICT coordinator for Education since 2016; additionally he has 31 years' experience of being a Teacher in a number of schools across Inverclyde and in Renfrewshire authority. His current post involves linking with colleagues across Scotland on the delivery of digital learning. Advice has been sought through the key digital link groups to which he is attached and from Education Scotland colleagues able to share examples of best practice from across the country and elsewhere. He has links with key technology suppliers and digital platform providers.</p>
Equalities monitoring data	<p>A record of devices issues to students / families is held by both Education and CLD. This data is linked to the measures of Free Meals entitlement (FME), SIMD etc. known to these services.</p>
User feedback (including complaints)	<p>Feedback from families throughout the last 18 months has been primarily around access to digital devices at home for remote learning, particularly amongst families of low income and those with larger numbers of children in the family. The challenges of also having to use their own devices for work purposes whilst at the same time online schooling was taking place and costs of connectivity were regular features of the feedback given.</p> <p>Parents also indicated they found it helpful that nurseries and schools were making full use of a range of online communication platforms to support learning and the wellbeing of their children during the periods of lockdown.</p>
Stakeholders	
Other	<p>Libraries &amp; Museum Service  Microsoft Education Team</p>

Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?	Although the commitment from Scottish Government to provide digital devices for all Primary and Secondary age children was announced in May 2021, the detail behind the timescale and scope of that commitment has yet to be fully shared with the Council. Although aspirational in its promise, such a large scale change will significantly impact on the current digital infrastructure within our educational establishments, the need for administration and technical ICT support/repair around that offer, a need for future refreshment and replacement programmes to be in place and also a challenge about the levels of connectivity available to our learners.
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## 10. Consequences of analysis

What steps will you take in response to the findings of your analysis? Please select at least one of the following and provide a brief explanation.

a.	Continue development with no changes	X	<p>Operationally it is evident that the current focus on class based desktop devices is not flexible enough if we are placed in the same situation as March 2020. The service has need therefore to change towards being able to work from anywhere, at any time. This will require the planned refreshment of digital devices to continue.</p> <p>The Scottish Government commitment around devices for learners, also requires Education Services to consider and plan for the implementation of support, device management and on-boarding of this significant change to the use of digital devices within our establishments. Confirmation of the Scottish Government commitment is expected during session 2021-2022, following which the impact on the delivery of the Strategy 2021-28 will be assessed and appropriate action taken.</p>
b.	Continue development with minor alterations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c.	Continue development with major changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d.	Discontinue development and consider alternatives (where relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How will the effect of the policy, function or strategy be monitored following implementation?

Education Services and ICT Services will engage all establishments in a regular review of their digital capacity and infrastructure. The Education Officer with responsibility for ICT will continue to monitor establishment improvement plans to ensure that the inclusion of the digital strategy is included as a priority.

Heads of establishment will report on an annual basis of the success of their own digital improvement journey as part of their annual Standards & Quality reports. Schools will evaluate the quality of digital approaches within their observations of learning and lesson planning.

Updates on the implementation and progress made with this strategy will be communicated to the Corporate Management Team and Education Committee.

When is the policy, function or strategy due to be implemented?

It is due to start in Session 2021-2022, with the completion of the interactive whiteboard replacement programme identified as an initial priority.

When will the policy, function or strategy be reviewed?

As part of the decisions taken to phase some of the changes indicated in the strategy over a period of 7 years, it is expected that there will be regular opportunities to review the success of this strategy. Frequent changes to the type of digital solutions that are available will mean that other aspects of the strategy can be revisited if required on an annual basis. It is felt that a review in 4-5 years' time will be appropriate to ensure that it is on course to deliver its expected outcomes. This should coincide with the normal expected lifespan of the digital devices being suggested in the strategy.

What resources are available for the implementation of the policy, function or strategy? Have these resources changed?

Funding for resources is identified within the strategy. This will impact annually on the Education Service budget decision making processes. A longer term funding framework is proposed as part of this strategy.

**11. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of the policy, function or strategy.**

The challenges around providing high levels of connectivity to all at home will continue to be evident. This may be resolved as part of the Scottish Government commitment to providing devices for all learners in Primary and Secondary school.

Inverclyde Education Services is however committed as part of the wider council digital access strategy to extending access to free internet connectivity for learners within our schools, libraries and community centres.

**Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:**

Name:	Norman Greenshields and Michael Roach
Position:	Education Officer and Head of Education respectively
Date:	24/09/21

**Authorised by:**

Name:	Ruth Binks
Position:	Corporate Director
Date:	4/10/21

Thank you for your assistance with the completion of this task.

Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy Officer at [karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk).