

Education Scotland
Consultation on Scotland's Equity Toolkit
25 November 2022

Introduction

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to comment on Education Scotland's Equity Toolkit.
2. The NASUWT is the Teachers' Union, representing teachers and school leaders in all sectors of education.

Specific

How would you describe the functionality of Scotland's Equity Toolkit? To what extent do the headings and navigation buttons help you to locate content? What improvements can you suggest?

3. The current format and length mitigate against the equity toolkit being easy to navigate. It is unreasonable to expect a teacher to have the time to read the whole document, let alone investigate the numerous hyperlinks contained therein.
4. The format feels busy and overwhelming, the headings are unnecessarily wordy and the text is unaligned. Sketch notes, where used, do not add to the content and can themselves be challenging to read and absorb.

5. Practitioners will want to dip into sections, but it is not clear where the headings start and end. There is an uneven distribution of content across headings as well as repetitive content therein, much of which needs to be reduced in length with more succinct points being made.
6. It is not clear which hyperlinks take you to other sections of the same document and which hyperlinks take you to external pages. When you click on a link which directs you externally, and then wish to return to the toolkit, you are brought back to page 1 instead of the page you left.
7. Some pages appear awash with web links without context: it is hard to envisage how a practitioner would usefully navigate what appears to be a data-dump of resources.
8. It might be useful to break up the text with some short video content; however, it must be relevant. Equally, where graphics or pictures are used, these must add content to the text, not just a text break.
9. While reflective questions are generally considered useful by teachers, the ones contained within the document are very broad and would benefit from exemplification.

To what extent does content in Scotland's Equity Toolkit meet the needs of practitioners to address equity and support the refreshed mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge? What suggestions can you make to improve content to ensure it is useful for practitioners to support improved outcomes for learners affected by poverty?

10. The equity toolkit is trying to meet the needs of too many people and this may be the reason some concepts are over explained. It is not tailored sufficiently to meet the needs of any of the potential users, be they SMT, class teachers, QIOs or external organisations. Equally, the range of settings targeted is very generic – the document should at least provide

examples such as secondary headteachers, ASN QIOs undertaking school evaluation or even additional reading for teachers studying for their masters.

11. The toolkit would benefit from a much clearer purpose – how is this intended to be used and in what way? For example, could it be for a headteacher engaging with their staff around the school improvement plan? There needs to be less content on the policy background and more practical advice and assistance provided to teachers in the classroom. It would also be useful to reference the GTCS standards within the document.
12. The content needs to be research based, but the research background does not need to be so heavily referenced in the main **content**; it can be provided in an Appendix or footnote.
13. Sadly, much of the excellent content within the toolkit is lost due to the size of the toolkit, the layout, wordy content and excessive hyperlinks. The two pages on cost of the school day are excellent, but they are easily missed within the 167 page toolkit.

What overall feedback and ideas do you have for how Scotland's Equity Toolkit might be improved or developed? What further support and/or resources would be helpful for practitioners to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap?

14. The NASUWT is fully behind schools being provided with support in order to achieve equity in educational outcomes. However, as is clear from the comments above, there are real issues around manageability, and burdens on teachers, resulting from this draft.

15. It may be that this document is trying to cover too much. Perhaps it would be better to have a higher level summary document with the key concepts and then individual smaller web pages breaking things down into headings such as reading, writing and numeracy.
16. Embedding equity should also not need a separate approach which risks placing the policy intention at the side. Instead, equity should be a thread which runs throughout all materials being provided by Education Scotland. The Union would also wish to see protected characteristics and examples of intersectionality, with economic disadvantage referenced in any advice.
17. The document has not adequately been framed within the current policy landscape in Scotland. It is not clear how this document sits within an overarching vision for recovery. Equally, there are real concerns that this document will quickly date, given its length and the number of external documents linked therein.
18. Finally, the Union is worried that the content on assessment is unlikely to age well in light of the Hayward Review. It may be premature to make statements on assessment before this review has concluded. Similarly, making assertions around the curriculum before the conclusion of the national discussion seems unwise.

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