STEP FIVE

REGULARLY REVISIT YOUR ACTION PLAN

There's a lot to celebrate at this point! Now that your school community has taken action to reduce and remove costs, you can start to assess how well they are working.

Are the children and young people in your school community able to engage more fully in the school day? Has the stress of extra costs been reduced or removed for parents and carers?

Things change, and new challenges arise for families. Cost of the School Day is an ongoing process - regularly revisiting your plan helps everyone to see where actions are working and where they need tweaked to work better. Your working group can help with this process, and it's good to meet at agreed points to review how things are going. Keep communicating with your school community and seeking their views, experiences and solutions.

To support your work in Step Five, this section of the toolkit includes:

- **Information on Cost of the School Day self-evaluation**

- **Voices from school communities across Scotland talking about what they have achieved with a Cost of the School Day approach**.

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY AND SELF EVALUATION

All of the resources in this toolkit can help you evaluate how well your school is addressing the impact of poverty on children's wellbeing, learning and achievement and how well children from low income households are being served in terms of:

- equal access to the curriculum and resources for learning

- an inclusive school culture and ethos where discrimination is challenged

- staff and learner awareness of poverty

- participation of children and families on low incomes in the life of the school

- support to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

The sketchnote below shows highly effective Cost of the School Day practice identified by HM Inspectors at Glenrothes High School in Fife who found evidence of effective action to reduce school costs, remove barriers, promote equity and support learners.

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

It's important to regularly revisit specific actions contained in your Cost of the School Day plan. At these points you can find out whether what you are doing is working as intended and whether any new issues have arisen. Planning ahead and building review dates into your plan can help to keep it fresh in people's minds. At these points it's useful to ask:

- **How are we doing?**
- **How do we know?**
- **What are we going to do now?**

Lots of the answers might be clear from the data you have collected along the way – for example, has attendance at a club improved or has the number of young people registered for free school meals increased? – but you may need to check some other things again through surveys or discussions or other means – for example, parental awareness of entitlements or perceived uniform and trip affordability. Many of the resources in this toolkit can be reused or adapted to do this if necessary.

Self-evaluation around Cost of the School Day is a key part of wider self-evaluation for equity. Education Scotland's **Scottish Attainment Challenge self-evaluation resource** sets out features of highly effective practice and challenge questions for schools, local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives on the themes of leadership, learning and teaching and families and communities, including Cost of the School Day.

How could you use the resources in this toolkit to help you answer some of these questions?

Families and communities

Extract from Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge self evaluation resource.

i) Cost of the school day

> **Features of highly effective practice**
>
> - Schools and local authorities are sensitive to families facing socio-economic challenges. The dignity of families is respected while ensuring that children and young people do not miss out on opportunities and experiences because of financial barriers.
>
> - Arrangements are in place to ensure that children and young people can access additional experiences such as excursions and residential experiences. Targeted interventions, such as breakfast clubs and holiday programmes ensure that children and young people are not missing out as a result of hunger.
>
> - Schools and local authorities review and adapt their approaches to costs associated with the school day. For example, removing additional charges for curriculum subjects, sensitivity around fundraising and minimising events such as non-uniform days.

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Challenge questions

For schools and in classrooms	For local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives
• How well have we reviewed our school policies and procedures to ensure that we are mitigating against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • How well do all staff and partners respond to the needs of children and families facing barriers due to socio-economic circumstances? • To what extent do all staff have a sound understanding of the need to ensure the cost of the school day does not exclude some children and young people from the opportunities that we promote? • How effectively do we engage with children, parents and partners in reviewing the cost of the school day? To what extent do we involve them in making financial decisions? • To what extent have we considered how we will evidence the impact of our interventions and approaches? • How well are we tracking and monitoring our progress and ensuring equity? How can we ensure this continues if children and learning at home?	• How well are we supporting and empowering schools with mitigating the cost of the school day? • To what extent do our local authority policies and procedures help to mitigate against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • What policy and procedures do we have in place to ensure any pupil, who may be learning at home, can access their learning digitally? • How well are we providing any additional resources or support to schools to help them address issues associated with the cost of the school day? How effective is this support at achieving equity?
At this time of educational recovery, to what extent:	At this time of educational recovery, to what extent:
• Have we reviewed our school procedures to ensure that we are mitigating against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • Have we planned to support families with fuel, food or data poverty issues? • Do we have procedures in place that allow pupils to access their learning online if they are learning from home through the provision of hardware and data if required? • Do staff ensure resources for planned, progressive learning activities are accessible to all?	• Do our local authority policies and procedures help to mitigate against additional barriers that may prevent children and young people from participating in all aspects of their education? • Do our policies and procedures ensure that every pupil learning from home can access their learning digitally? • Do we have procedures in place that allow pupils to access their learning online if they are learning from home through the provision of hardware and data if required?

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

SCHOOL COMMUNITIES TALKING ABOUT IMPACT

We know that poverty isn't going to be 'fixed' overnight and that the challenges children and families face are often complicated. However, we've also seen that sometimes the simplest solutions can make a huge difference to how children and young people feel about their time at school. Feeling included and good about school means that children and young people are much more likely to be engaged and happy to learn. Removing cost barriers means the richest experiences are possible for all children and young people.

Schools all over Scotland have shown that change is possible. Here are just a few thoughts from some children and young people, parents and school staff whose schools have taken Cost of the School Day approach.

The quotes below are all taken from Cost of the School Day work in schools, research and films.

"I felt embarrassed but school helped me to realise **everyone needs a bit of help at times.**"
(Parent, East Dunbartonshire)

"I think it's good because **you don't want anyone left out**. It's just unfair if someone got more than someone else."
(Child, P4, South Lanarkshire)

"Something as simple as the wording of an email that acknowledges how many families will be struggling, written in a way that is respectful, has been reassuring and supportive: I feel less alone and less embarrassed about financial worries."
(Parent)

"My school made me aware that **there was help out there** for me and my children."
(Parent, Dumfries and Galloway)

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

"It's part of everything we do here really. What we try to do is make sure that there's absolutely **no barriers to children having the broadest experience at school**. Participation is part of supporting children to have aspirations for the future. We look at a **rich experience with little expense**. For a lot of our families, **the stigma is gone**. I would say that Cost of the School Day is at the forefront of everyone's mind and we are just making sure that there's not too much pressure on the pocket for children coming to school."
(Head Teacher,
Rosebank Primary School, Dundee)

"I'm so thankful for the school staff that are there and all the help I've had from
(Parent, Dundee)

"I think if a child didn't have as much chance as everyone else, that this school would help out. Everybody's on a **level playing field** in this school."

"That seems to be the main value within the school as well, that everyone's **treated with respect**, everyone's treated the same regardless."
(Parents in conversation, South Lanarkshire)

"We as a group, we show that it doesn't matter where you come from or what you have, it's not about that when you're at school, it's about **learning together, being together, having fun together**. We try to tell people that it doesn't matter if I have nothing and he's rich…"

"And in the school it's all about **raising awareness of the effect of what's happening to people** that can't afford things, they might want to but they can't."
(Two young people from a pupil anti-poverty group, Fife)

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

"I believe what we have done has a positive impact on our school ethos and culture of inclusion. Every individual barrier that could exist, whether it be uniform or anything else, if the school is seen to want to tackle that properly then there is a **confidence from pupils and parents and staff that the school is committed to inclusion** in its widest sense. And that means that people will be more comfortable approaching the school on any other issue because they know that we take it seriously. If they see that we are working really hard to reduce the cost of the school day, then they will know we are open to any other areas that might be a barrier to fully enjoying and accessing school life. So I believe that there's a **cultural impact** from taking these issues seriously."

(Head Teacher, Port Glasgow High School, Inverclyde)

"Like our school, **if we do it for free we can all come in**."

"And have an education. Like everybody should have an education to play, run and all that, get fit. That's why our school does it for free, 'cause like **they want the kids to be happy and able to learn**."

(Two pupils in conversation about why their school runs free after school clubs, South Lanarkshire)

"I think Cost of the School Day has given children **access to resources, to experiences and to school life** that in other places might cost. And I think it's really important to take account of Cost of the School Day. Because you don't realise the barrier that that can be, for certain families to be able to access what other people take for granted."

(Head Teacher, Miller Primary School, Glasgow)

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

"Because I think that if you enjoy something you shouldn't have to pay for it if you're going to school. And if like people can't afford it and they want to be a baker when they're older then they might not be able to take classes like this. I just think that **everyone has the same opportunity to be something and to succeed**. I just think if it cost things then people wouldn't be able to do that."

(Young person discussing school policy of not charging for Home Economics, Lockerbie Academy, Dumfries and Galloway)

"**You don't need money** to come. If you're in this school you can dress up and come to the Halloween Party. The school gets some extra costumes and brings them in and then the people who do not have costumes get to go in and …"

"Just dance!"

"… get a costume and get changed into it!"

(Two children in conversation, Miller Primary School, Glasgow)

"Cost of the School Day has been hugely important to our school. We've got a very mixed catchment so we're huge on promoting **equality and fairness and inclusion**, and to do that we just make sure that there's just no cost for things. So Cost of the School Day is hugely important to us."

(Depute Head Teacher, Downfield Primary School, Dundee)

"The head teacher is really approachable and makes it seem normal and ok. She never says to my daughter that she gets things because she can't afford it. She always says we have spares, I thought you might like it. Or offers stuff to everyone."

(Parent, Moray)

"I think it's very much for our families and our children to feel included and feel part of the school. And **we don't want additional pressures** for families and we don't want additional pressures for children where you are setting some sort of home link task or you are setting something you could access at home but actually they can't do that. I think it's about being very inclusive and ensuring that what we're offering, we can back it up and we can support families. You know, I think that's really important."

(Head Teacher, Netherburn Primary School, South Lanarkshire)

"I **fully trust the staff** and feel that they would do anything to support me and my family."

(Parent, South Ayrshire)

"The school is really trying to **reduce the gap** between wealthy families and poor families."

(Parent, Shetland Islands)

"We believe in **an education system that's free to access**, and if an element isn't free to access then the system isn't free. So it feels like the right thing to do for us, and it feels that making all aspects **open and equal regardless of costs** is very much the right thing to do. Every year our S6 get to nominate two charities to raise money for and the last two years they've said that they wanted to raise money for the school's hardship fund. So they believe in it and we believe in it and together we are trying to make a **fairer education**."

(Head Teacher, Lockerbie Academy, Dumfries and Galloway)

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

"The impact is a more inclusive, happier school community… Our pupils, staff and parents notice a more relaxed atmosphere when the financial pressure is taken away from school events in this manner. Our advice to other schools on this journey would be to start off in small ways, as you are probably doing loads already to support families in reducing the Cost of the School Day so keep going."

(Head Teacher, Seafield Primary School, Moray)

"Being able for a'body to be able to enjoy themselves an nae hae the worry o' 'oh my god I'm going have tae go hame and say that I need this, or I have to go hame and say that'…It is just really nice to know **everyone's equal in this school, so no-one's singled out at all**."

(Young person, S6, Keith Academy, Moray)

"Well I think it actually does promote a sense of equality, like the blazers, because we can all get them for quite cheap. And it does really all **bring us together** cause we're all wearing the same stuff, and we're all looking smart together. It does put a good image on the school as well."

"Yeah, it means that the people who can't maybe afford, like if you were to wear your own clothes, the people who can't afford designer things wouldn't be penalized because they don't have those sort of things. Whereas **everyone's the same** if they're wearing the uniform."

(Two young people in conversation about their school's affordable uniform policy, Port Glasgow High School, Inverclyde)