

## Document 1 – Survey Delivery Group note of meeting

### SCOTTISH SURVEY OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY NOTE OF SURVEY DELIVERY GROUP MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015

Present: EAS: Elisabeth Boyling (Chair), Lindsay Bennison (Minutes)  
SQA: Barbara Hill, Marion Menzies, Lillian Munro, Gordon Brown, Alex Bell

General discussion in the group about the future of SSLN in light of the First Minister (FM) speech on Programme for Government (and associated Draft National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education) which states “over time this (new system of national standardised assessment) will replace the sample-based Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy”. EAS are awaiting direction from FM office on how this is to happen. SSLN 2016 Literacy will go ahead, possibly in a reduced format. The position on SSLN 2017 is not yet clear. EAS working to get a steer on the components of the SSLN 2016 and position on SSLN 2017 as soon as possible and will update SQA when further information is known.

**Action: EAS to inform SQA of developments on NIF/future of SSLN**

**[redacted – rest of document – out of scope]**

**Document 2 – SSLN Cessation GSS form – sent to UK National Statistician 15/9/16**

<b>Name of output:</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy</a>
<b>Description of statistics:</b>	<p>The SSLN is an annual sample survey which monitors national performance in literacy and numeracy in alternate years, for school pupils in P4, P7 and S2. It encompasses:</p> <p>Numeracy assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• two written assessment booklets</li><li>• one interactive teacher/pupil assessment and,</li><li>• a pupil questionnaire</li></ul> <p>Literacy assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• two assessment booklets, one paper-based and one online</li><li>• a group discussion (listening and talking skills), or</li><li>• submission of class-based written work</li><li>• a pupil questionnaire</li></ul> <p>A sample of teachers are also asked to complete a questionnaire on learning and teaching practices and experiences in the classroom.</p>

	<p>The SSLN pupil sample consists of two P4 and two P7 pupils from every participating primary school and up to twelve S2 pupils from every participating secondary school. This produces a target sample size of around 4,000 pupils per stage. Pupil results are weighted to produce national level results.</p>
<b>Status:</b>	National Statistics
<b>Reasons for cessation:</b>	<p>The key reasons for the cessation of the SSLN are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been repeated requests for local authority level results which the SSLN sample design cannot provide, and cannot easily be amended to provide.</li> <li>• Policy decision taken to introduce new census-based collection (the Teacher Professional Judgement collection) of literacy and numeracy performance will provide data at school, local authority and national level. It will also provide disaggregation by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation based on user needs.</li> <li>• The Teacher Professional Judgement collection results will be more timely (6 month turnaround compared to 12 months)</li> <li>• The Teacher Professional Judgement collection will be far less burdensome on schools and local authorities</li> <li>• The SSLN assesses numeracy and literacy performance in alternate years; the Teacher Professional Judgement collection will gather data on both literacy and numeracy performance every year</li> </ul> <p>Combined, these changes will provide users with more valuable data in order to drive improvements across all parts of the education system.</p>
<p><b>Date of cessation:</b> Proposed date if consultation still underway.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government has announced the cessation of the SSLN within A Stronger Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2015-16 (<a href="http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00484439.pdf">http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00484439.pdf</a>, page 10) and Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland (<a href="http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf">http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf</a>, page 21).</p> <p>The SSLN 2016 fieldwork took place in May 2016; the results will be published in May 2017. This will be the last set of SSLN results.</p>
<p><b>Details of user consultation:</b> Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of how users alerted to consultation;</li> <li>• Length of consultation period; and</li> <li>• Relevant links.</li> </ul>	<p>The SSLN will cease as per the instructions of Scottish Government Ministers.</p> <p>A user communication plan is in place which includes letters/emails to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All local authority Directors of Education in Scotland</li> <li>• All local authority staff involved in administering the survey</li> <li>• All schools in Scotland</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All statistical users registered with <a href="#">Scotstat</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment of impact on users:</b></p> <p>Complete as far as is possible if currently awaiting outcome of consultation. Include details of other sources of statistics, whether official or otherwise, that may be used as alternatives.</p>	<p>Alternative data sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Professional Judgement collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Census based data collection of literacy and numeracy attainment of P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils</li> <li>Will be based on teacher judgement of whether pupil has achieved relevant CfE level for their stage</li> <li>Census based approach will allow disaggregation of data (school, local authority, nationally and by detailed deprivation categories)</li> <li>Annual collection beginning June 2016 with data published December 2016</li> </ul> </li> <li>National standardised assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nationally available online assessment tool for P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils</li> <li>Results will help teachers in planning their teaching and learning, and contribute to forming their professional teacher judgements</li> <li>Tool available August 2017 onwards</li> <li>Data available to class teachers, schools, and local authorities dependent on timing and frequency of use</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Statisticians have been involved in the development of both of these exercises.</p>
<p><b>Net impact on departmental statistical expenditure:</b></p> <p>Distinguish between actual reductions in statistical expenditure and savings reinvested into other statistical outputs.</p>	<p>A saving of approximately £750k grant funding to NDPB to administer the survey and collate the data.</p> <p>The reductions in resource associated with analysing SSLN data are being reinvested in new teams to provide statistical support on the new National Improvement Framework for Education data collections as described above.</p>

**Document 3 – SSLN Cessation Scotstat email – sent 20/1/17 to anyone registered with Scotstat who ticked an interest in education.**

**Change to literacy and numeracy attainment data**

The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) is being replaced with a new data collection on literacy and numeracy attainment based on teacher professional judgement (the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels Return).

The key reasons for the changes are:

- More comprehensive data will be available by school, local authority and deprivation breakdowns

- Data will be available on a more timely basis
- Burden on schools and local authorities will reduce

In addition to teacher professional judgement data, from August 2017 schools will have access to new standardised assessments on aspects of literacy and numeracy to be used by teachers to help them with planning their teaching and learning, and contribute to their professional teacher judgements.

SSLN 2016 (literacy) will therefore be the last SSLN, these results will be published in May 2017. The results from the first Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels Return were published in December (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/ACEL>).

If you have any questions please contact the SSLN Team.

SSLN Team  
Education Analysis  
Scottish Government

Telephone: 0131 244 0315  
Email: [SSLN@gov.scot](mailto:SSLN@gov.scot)  
Web: <http://www.gov.scot/sslN>

#### **Document 4 – email to Deputy First Minister – Statistics release SSLN Numeracy 2015**

**From:** Boyling E (Elisabeth)  
**Sent:** 20 May 2016 16:23  
**To:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Cc:** First Minister; Permanent Secretary; DG Education, Communities & Justice; Lloyd E (Elizabeth); McAllister C (Colin); Birt C (Christopher); Rafferty D (Donna); Mackie C (Christopher); Robertson FMG (Fiona); Johnston ATF (Alan); Wyeth C (Kit); Beattie K (Kathryn); Semple P (Pamela); McLean L (Liza); Morton B (Barbara); Donachie P (Peter); Creamer F (Frank); Simons TP (Tim); Bell D (Donna); Sheppard L (Lesley); Glen S (Sharon); Hicks C (Clare); Robb SJ (Stuart); Gunstone JM (John); Maxwell B (Bill); Copstick C (Carol); Renton JB (Jane); Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland); Logan G (Graeme); Brock D (Denise); Douglas F (Frances); Harvey L (Lorna); Halliday R (Roger); MacDougall A (Audrey); Wilson M (Mick); Bennison L (Lindsay); Golding B (Bruce); MacRury ME (Marion); Scott-Watson W (William)  
**Subject:** SSLN 2015 - Official Sensitive - Restricted Statistics until 9.30am on Tuesday 31st May 2016

**Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills**

Please find attached the Statistics Publication Notice: Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2015 (Numeracy), associated briefing and Statistical News Release.

**From: Elisabeth Boyling  
Education Analytical Services  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills**

**Statistics Publication Notice: Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2015 (Numeracy)**

**Future of the SSLN**

1. This will be the last set of SSLN numeracy results. The SSLN 2016 (literacy) fieldwork is nearing completion and results will be published in Spring 2017 - this will be the last set of SSLN literacy results. The creation of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education signaled a move away from a sample-based assessment of literacy and numeracy, and initiated the development of the census-based teacher professional judgement data collection on achievement of CfE levels. The Programme for Government, published in September 2015, stated that the NIF would replace the SSLN "over time". At a meeting with officials on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the First Minister agreed that the SSLN should end after the 2016 collection.

**Elisabeth Boyling**  
Education Analytical Services  
Ext: 41689

[redacted – rest of document – out of scope]

### **Document 5 – email to Deputy First Minister – Statistics release SSLN Literacy 2016**

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**From:** Boyling E (Elisabeth)  
**Sent:** 02 May 2017 12:45  
**To:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Cc:** First Minister; Minister for Childcare and Early Years; Permanent Secretary; DG Education, Communities & Justice; Lloyd E (Elizabeth); McAllister C (Colin); Birt C (Christopher); Mackie C (Christopher); Brown C (Catherine); Robertson FMG (Fiona); Bruce A (Andrew); Wyeth C (Kit); Semple P (Pamela); Pentland MK (Malcolm); Flunkert C (Craig); Bell D (Donna); Sheppard L (Lesley); Scott-Watson W (William); Hicks C (Clare); Maxwell B (Bill); Logan G (Graeme); Renton JB (Jane); Glen L (Louise); Duncan L (Lindsey); Brock D (Denise); Halliday R (Roger); MacDougall A (Audrey); Wilson M (Mick); Bennison L (Lindsay); Golding B (Bruce); MacRury ME (Marion); MacKinnon A (Anna); Stansfield A (Anna); McVicar M (Murray); Mackenzie E (Ewan); MacKenzie C (Catriona)  
**Subject:** SSLN 2016 - Official Sensitive - Restricted Statistics until 9.30am on Tuesday 9th May 2017

#### **Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills**

Please find attached the Statistics Publication Notice: Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2016 (Literacy) [58 pages] and associated briefing [14 pages]. A meeting with the Deputy First Minister and officials is scheduled for 3pm today.

#### ***Text from SSLN 2016 – Publication – Report in scope for this FOI request (p6 of 58)***

This is the last set of results from the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy. The replacement data source of pupil performance in literacy and numeracy is the [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels Return](#); the results of the 2015/16 collection were published on 13 December 2016. This data collection gathers information for all P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils and reports on the proportion of pupils who have achieved the expected CfE level relevant to their stage, based on teacher professional judgements, for numeracy and the three elements of literacy (reading, writing, listening and talking). The Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence results were published as experimental statistics to reflect the fact that they are based on a new and developing data source.

[redacted – rest of document - out of scope]

***Text from SSLN 2016 – Publication – Briefing – Ministerial Submission- in scope for this FOI request (p1 of 14)***

2. The SSLN is being replaced with the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data, as the measure of literacy and numeracy performance for the Broad General Education. The first set of ACEL results (2015/16) were published as experimental statistics in December 2016, reflecting the fact that they are based on a new and developing data source. Note that the SSLN 2016 and ACEL 2015-16 collections both relate to May 2016.

[redacted – rest of document – out of scope]

**Elisabeth Boyling**  
**SSLN Survey Manager**  
SSLN Team | Education Analysis  
Scottish Government | t: 0131 244 1689

## **Document 6 - SSLN Project Management Board – Note of meeting**

### **MEETING OF THE SSLN PROJECT MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 1<sup>st</sup> JULY 2015 IN CONFERENCE ROOM 12, VQ AT 10.00 AM**

#### **Present**

Project Management Board:

Kit Wyeth, SAP Unit (Chair)  
Alan Milliken, ADES  
Elisabeth Morrison, ES (by phone)  
Tim Simons, Curr Unit  
Martyn Ware, SQA  
Mick Wilson, EAS

Also attending:

Elisabeth Boyling, EAS  
Marion MacRury, EAS (Minutes)

#### **6. SSLN and the National Improvement Framework**

[redacted - 2 paragraphs – out of scope]

KW advised that there was no clear view at this stage from Ministers, as to the role and future of the SSLN within the National Improvement Framework. It was acknowledged that a decision was required soon, as initial 2016 activity is scheduled for Autumn 2015. It was noted that the 2016 survey would allow for 3 years of data for both literacy and numeracy. In addition, there could be negative publicity in discontinuing the SSLN, as it may suggest that there was something wrong with the survey when this is not so. KW questioned whether it provided Ministers with what they needed to know. MW referred to previous PMB discussions on the provision of LA data and the conclusions reached that this could not be provided by scaling up the current survey model. MW acknowledged it may be possible to adapt and scale up elements such as reading and numeracy to a larger scale. Caution was expressed about the Framework discarding a 'hard' assessment in favour of a 'soft' one.

**Action 6.1: SG to keep PMB members informed regarding decisions regarding the SSLN and the National Improvement Framework.**

[redacted – rest of document – out of scope]

## **Document 7 - SSLN Project Management Board – note of meeting**

### **MEETING OF THE SSLN PROJECT MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016 IN MEETING ROOM 3H-55, VQ AT 10.00 AM**

#### **Present**

Project Management Board:

Kit Wyeth, SAP Unit (Chair)  
Carol Copstick, ES  
Liza McLean, Curr Unit  
Alan Milliken, ADES (via conference call)  
Martyn Ware, SQA

Also attending:

Elisabeth Boyling, EAS  
Marion MacRury, EAS (Minutes)  
Barbara Morton, Curr Unit

### **3. SSLN and the National Improvement Framework**

**[redacted – 3 paragraphs – out of scope]**

3.2 SSLN 2017 – KW advised that SG were waiting for the outcome of the Scottish parliamentary elections, the formation of Government and confirmation of the Cabinet Secretary for Education. However, there was an expectation that previous discussions would prevail and a decision would be formalised that SSLN 2016 was the last survey, with the results being published in Spring 2017. MWr sought clarity given the delay with procurement of the national standardised assessment tool. MW advised that the assessment tool was not a replacement for the SSLN but a tool to help inform teacher judgement. He confirmed that the teacher judgement collection was viewed as the natural replacement in terms of national level data. It was envisaged that the assessments would be trialled in schools in 2017 and therefore the SSLN should not be undertaken at the same time.

**[redacted – rest of document – out of scope]**

## **Document 8 - SSLN Project Management Board – Note of meeting**

### **MEETING OF THE SSLN PROJECT MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2016 IN MEETING ROOM 2D-46, VQ AT 10.00 AM**

#### **Present**

Project Management Board:

Kit Wyeth, SAP Unit (Chair)  
Carol Copstick, ES  
Liza McLean, Curr Unit  
Alan Milliken, ADES (via conference call)  
Martyn Ware, SQA  
Mick Wilson EAS

Also attending:

Elisabeth Boyling, EAS  
Marion MacRury, EAS (Minutes)  
Pam Semple, SAP Unit

256 – KW advised that there had still been no firm decision but that the expectation was that there would be no change in approach with 2016 being the last survey. It was clarified that August was the critical date whereby the decision must have been made. KW referred to the proposed DFM's Delivery Plan which was due to be published by the end of June (term). KW confirmed that he had suggested, in discussions with colleagues including Mick Wilson), that it would be a sensible point and vehicle to inform the education system / profession as to the future of the SSLN. KW indicated he was unsure if this would go forward but undertook to advise PMB as soon as a decision was made. It was noted that it was particularly important that communications were open and clear in the lead up to a potential announcement in the DFM's Delivery Plan (due end June).

**Action 2.1 KW to advise PMB members as soon as a decision is made re reference to SSLN in DFM's Delivery Plan.**

[redacted – rest of document – out of scope]

### **Document 9 – email to SSLN Project Management Board - clarity on the cessation of SSLN**

**From:** MacRury ME (Marion)

**Sent:** 29 June 2016 13:31

**To:** Wyeth C (Kit); Wilson M (Mick); 'martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk'; millikena@stirling.gov.uk; Copstick C (Carol); McLean L (Liza); Boyling E (Elisabeth); Semple P (Pamela)

**Subject:** SSLN Project Management Board - Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – A Delivery Plan for Scotland

Dear all

Please see notification below re the publication of 'Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – A Delivery Plan for Scotland', which provides clarity that SSLN 2016 will be the last set of SSLN results (see "Performance Information").

Given this development, PMB are required to consider how best to further communicate this message. A proposed plan is:

- Update Directors of Education as part of series of phone calls planned for August re teacher judgement data collection.
- A thank you letter (at the start of the 2016/17 school year) to all schools (cc Directors) for their involvement and support in the SSLN, highlighting particular involvement (coordinators, assessors, task developers, ref group members etc.)
- A letter to local authority staff (Assessment Coordinators & cc'd to Directors) again at the start of the 2016/17 school year) which will outline and advise on data collections going forward.

Grateful for any other thoughts or suggestions members may have at your earliest convenience.

Regards



[Marion MacRury](#)

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tel: 0131 244 0315  
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<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/SSLN>

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**From:** McRae TA (Tracey)

**Sent:** 29 June 2016 09:46

**To:** DIRECTORATE FOR LEARNING; DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION ANALYTICAL SERVICES

**Subject:** Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – A Delivery Plan for Scotland

Dear Colleagues

Following the Education Summit on 15 June the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced yesterday the publication of 'Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – A Delivery Plan for Scotland'. Please find attached the link to the publication on the Scottish Government website.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools>

Tracey McRae

Learning Directorate, [Buidheann-Stiùiridh an Ionnsachaidh](#)

People and Infrastructure, Empowering Schools Unit, [Daoine agus Bun-structair, Aonad](#)

[Cumhachdachadh Sgoiltean](#)

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## **Document 10 – Email and submission to Ministers - The future of the SSLN and how that relates to the Framework**

**From:** Bell D (Donna)

**Sent:** 07 August 2015 13:38

**To:** First Minister; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training; Minister for Children and Young People; DG Learning & Justice; Higgins K (Kate); Robertson FMG (Fiona); Maxwell B (Bill); Logan G (Graeme); Bell D (Donna); Johnston ATF (Alan); Hicks C (Clare); Clark T (Tara); Wyeth C (Kit); MacDougall A (Audrey); Wilson M (Mick); Permanent Secretary; Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages; Fallis R (Russell); Sanda L (Lorraine); Birt C (Christopher); Wood S (Scott)

**Subject:** National Improvement Framework

Katy/David

[redacted – 3 paragraphs – out of scope]

The first elements of that information are attached here and cover 3 related but separate issues:

1. The future of the SSLN and how that relates to the Framework – **for decision**;

[redacted – 2 sections – out of scope]

[redacted – 3 paragraphs – out of scope]

Please let me know if you require anything further.

Thanks

Donna

From: Lorraine Sanda (Strategy and Performance Unit)

7 August 2015

First Minister  
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

## **NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK AND THE FUTURE OF THE SCOTTISH SURVEY OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY (SSLN)**

### **Purpose**

3. To seek a decision on the future of the SSLN.

### **Priority**

4. Urgent. A quick response would be appreciated to prepare for an announcement on the SSLN and National Improvement Framework as part of the Programme for Government.

### **Background**

5. Further to the previous National Improvement Framework submission from Lorraine Sanda, dated 24 July, this note provides advice on the future of the SSLN.

6. As you know, the SSLN is an annual sample based assessment of literacy and numeracy (in alternate years) in P4, P7 and S2. It is aligned to Curriculum for Excellence levels and is designed to produce national results including breakdowns by gender and deprivation. The survey is delivered in partnership between Scottish Government, SQA, Education Scotland and ADES, involving around 2,200 schools, 10,500 pupils and 3,700 teachers per year.

7. The National Improvement Framework initiates a move away from a sample survey towards a consistent national pupil level assessment. This will provide child level data which will inform targeted interventions with individuals and ultimately improve outcomes for all children.

### **Discussion**

8. Initial discussions with Ministers have indicated that stopping the SSLN in due course is the preferred way forward. The data SSLN provides will not be needed alongside pupil level data from the Framework and we have factored that into the Framework development.

9. The timing of the cessation of the SSLN does however need careful consideration. We need to ensure clarity on the new approach to assessment that the Framework will require; consider when

the Framework will provide alternative data and consider presentational issues as well as burden on schools, teachers and pupils. Options on timing are outlined below:

#### Option 1 – Do not conduct the SSLN 2016 (literacy) survey

10. Publication of the SSLN 2015 (numeracy) survey results would go ahead as planned in spring 2016 and this would be the last SSLN report. This would mean since the start of the Survey in 2011, there would be a suite of two sets of SSLN literacy results and three sets of SSLN numeracy results.

11. There is broad consensus that whilst the SSLN provides a useful snapshot of literacy and numeracy performance, there is little potential for SSLN results to inform targeted interventions in the classroom, one of the main aims of the National Improvement Framework. This was a view shared by ADES representatives at the National Improvement Framework stakeholder event on 16 June 2015.

12. Stopping the survey now would reduce the burden on schools, teachers and pupils in 2016. If we proceed with the SSLN 2016 (literacy) survey, the fieldwork period would overlap with the National Improvement Framework teacher judgement data collection. We are mindful of the additional burden this would cause and the associated risk of non-participation.

13. There are also presentational challenges of reporting both SSLN and teacher judgement results collected within the same timeframe. The different methodologies could show different results and, despite not being directly comparable, this could create unhelpful confusion.

14. Continuation of the SSLN is not in line with the approach to assessment we are advocating through the Framework. The Framework annual report will present a holistic view of Scottish education, drawn from a wide range of information. By publishing the 2016 SSLN results in spring 2017, between two (2016 and 2017) National Improvement Framework reports, the focus may unhelpfully revert back to a narrow measure of attainment.

15. Withdrawing the survey now would mean that there would be no national assessment of literacy in 2016 (and if it went ahead the data would not be available until spring 2017). There will, however, be assessment of pupils in the Attainment Challenge areas and therefore around 28,000 pupils in an estimated 400 primary schools will be undertaking assessments similar to some elements of the testing which will be introduced in 2017. In addition we will be collecting pupil level teacher judgement data on literacy and numeracy by CfE levels, at the end of the 2015/16 school year for all local authorities. The new national assessment will be tested in the Challenge areas in 2016 and available in all local authorities in 2017.

#### Option 2 – conduct the SSLN 2016 (literacy) survey

16. Alternatively, Ministers could announce that the **SSLN 2016 (literacy) will be the last SSLN**. The 2016 (literacy) fieldwork would be conducted at the end of the 2015/16 school year, however results would not be published until spring 2017.

17. The primary benefit of conducting next year's survey would be the creation of a suite of three sets of results for both literacy and numeracy. Running the SSLN 2016 (literacy) would also provide some additional assessment-based data, in addition to the teacher judgement collection.

18. Presentationally, this would also minimise the period between the final report of standardised, albeit small-sampled, SSLN assessments (spring 2017) and the first Framework report using national assessments at the end of 2017. However, it would increase the scope for 'contradictory' results as we move to the new Framework, it would not remove the likelihood of criticism for ending SSLN, and it would lessen the opportunity to tie that into the new Framework approach to be announced this autumn.

#### **Recommendation**

19. Based on the considerations set out above, we recommend that we **do not conduct the 2016 SSLN**.

## **Cost savings**

20. The Scottish Government grant funds the SQA £817k to administer the SSLN (literacy). In addition to the cash costs, resource costs are £210k for Education Analytical Services and an estimated £455k as compliance costs to schools (based on time required to conduct the survey and average teacher salary). The cost to administer SSLN is therefore in the region of £1.5m. Continuation for a further year will mean dual running of the cost to develop the new Framework with the cost of the SSLN. On cessation of the SSLN, the funding involved can be transferred across to support the Framework.

## **Sensitivities**

21. There are likely to be criticisms of stopping the SSLN, politically and in the media. Given the negative perceptions of the last set of SSLN results, we must manage the presentational implications of stopping the SSLN i.e. the change is being made to provide better data, not because the data collected from SSLN was unfavourable. Robust communications and stakeholder engagement plans are being developed.

22. It is proposed that a decision to stop the SSLN will sit alongside the wider announcement on the National Improvement Framework as part of Programme for Government. This would be in advance of the normal timing of SSLN communications with Directors of Education in October. A key part of this announcement will be communicating the comparative advantages of the new Framework to individual pupils, teachers and policy-makers, and that it will deliver more than the SSLN: better diagnostic data that can influence practice and get better outcomes for children; a reduction in bureaucracy and; improved professional training, development and support packages.

23. As SQA employ staff whose sole responsibility is SSLN administration, any decision to stop SSLN would have an impact on related contracts. We would work with senior managers within SQA to notify relevant staff members as soon as possible and in accordance with contractual obligations.

## **Conclusion**

24. Ministers are asked to note the recommendation not to proceed with the 2016 SSLN (Option 1) and to provide a decision around the timing of the last survey. This should be taken in light of previous and accompanying advice on the National Improvement Framework and associated measurement of literacy and numeracy performance.

**Lorraine Sanda**

Strategy and Performance Unit (Ext. 47678)