

SCF Impact measures

Your questions answered

This information tells you about:

The measures

The purpose of the measures

Carrying out the measures

The measures

What are the SCF Impact measures?

The SCF impact measures are simple rating scales measuring student engagement (a 12-point rating scale) and well-being (a 10-point rating scale).

The engagement measure rates how engaged in learning autistic students are. It looks at how actively students join in at school and runs from 0 = *Stays at home to learn* through to 5.5 = *Joins in actively in all lessons, an independent learner*. Each 0.5 step along the scale is accompanied by a descriptor. The scale and descriptors cover behavioural engagement (how actively students take part) and cognitive engagement (how aware of and involved they are in the learning).

The well-being scale rates how anxious autistic students feel in different situations around school and runs from 1 = *I avoid this if I can* through to 5.5 = *I enjoy this*. As with the engagement measure, each 0.5 step along the scale is accompanied by a descriptor. The progression reflects how much support is needed to lower anxiety, how aware students are/able to use strategies and how much they are able to take part. This scale is accompanied by pictures - icons representing different facial expressions.

We ask SCF-funded schools and colleges to complete SCF impact measures on a sample of autistic students before starting funded activity, and then again afterwards.

Why do the tools measure engagement and well-being/anxiety?

SCF aims to *advance the education and mental health of autistic young people*. In our grant-making we *will consider projects that will help young people with autism access mainstream school*.

We have chosen impact measures which reflect these aims and which will give us the information we need to check how well we fulfil them.

How were the measures developed?

SCF researched engagement and well-being, this included looking at tools that were already available either being used in studies or in practice. While keen to ensure a strong evidence base, we also wanted to develop tools which were manageable and useful in busy secondary schools - and which would yield the data we needed to show impact. Based on this, we adapted existing tools using these criteria:

Measures should be

- Quick to administer
- As visual as possible
- Able to be carried out by non-experts
- Accompanied by simple instructions
- Relevant to all autistic young people regardless of cognitive level
- Meaningful and useful for the school/student - not just another thing to do
- Able to demonstrate impact after a short period of time - start from a low point and have small steps
- Able to show functional impact relevant to SCF objectives
- Easy to analyse
- Reflective of the ASC students' own views - involving them as much as possible

We ended up with four draft measures - two for engagement, two for well-being.

How do you know they work?

Once we had developed draft measures, we ran a 'test and trial' pilot with a selection of schools and colleges who had already been involved in SCF grant-giving. These schools and colleges gave feedback on all four draft measures and selected at least two to trial with a sample of students. They submitted their data which SCF analysed and sent back to them in the form of charts.

Feedback in the trial focused on the manageability and usefulness of the measures. We also asked for suggestions as to how the measures could be improved. Overall, school and college staff were positive about the measures: they were easy to understand, quick to administer and yielded useful information which they could use with students, but also with colleagues and with school leadership.

Following the feedback, we made adjustments to the measures. These versions of the measures were used during 2023 in two rapid response funding rounds. We have continued to gather feedback from schools and colleges, and as a result have made further adjustments.

The purpose of the measures

Why are SCF asking schools and colleges to carry out the measures?

SCF has a strong commitment to measuring impact. We are keen to fund creative solutions to the problems facing autistic students in schools and colleges, and want to make sure that our support makes a difference.

Initially, we gathered information which gave us a broad picture of the impact made, but not how specifically we were meeting our aim to *advance the education and mental health of autistic young people*. The SCF impact measures enable us to do this.

Why do I have to carry the measures out with at least 5 students?

Having data on five students for each funded activity will give SCF a good amount of data for our analysis. It will also give schools and colleges enough data to see patterns in engagement and well-being for example:

- Identifying which lessons autistic students find hardest or manage well
- Identifying which aspects of school create the most anxiety in autistic students
- Seeing where SCF funding has made the most difference, for communicating to staff and leadership

If you are planning an activity from which fewer than 5 autistic students will benefit, then please just complete the measures with the relevant number of students.

What if my SCF-funded activity is with just one autistic student?

If you are planning an activity from which fewer than 5 autistic students will benefit, then please just complete the measures with the relevant number of students.

Can I carry out the measures with more than 10 students?

You can carry out the measures with as many autistic students as you want, but think about how to submit this data to SCF:

- For *How am I working in school?* and *Student Engagement* (adult view) it is possible to submit data for a maximum of ten students on one Google Form. You can always start another Form if you want to receive analysis of data for more than 10 students.
- For the well-being measure (*How do I feel at school?*)
 - it is possible to submit data for a maximum of ten students on one Google Form. You can always start another Form if you want to receive analysis of data for more than 10 students.

What is the benefit of carrying out the optional *Student Engagement Measure* (adult view)?

The two mandatory measures are student-rated measures. It's important to us that we gather information from the students' point of view. We also invite you to complete an optional third engagement measure, rated by adults, which mirrors the student-rated engagement measure. Completing this will give you really useful comparison information showing the difference between how staff and students view their engagement in school. You can use this for a range of purposes, including discussion at staff meetings, as part of intervention with the students to talk about how they join in lessons.

See our [guidance](#) for more information about using the data.

What's in it for me, autistic students and my school?

When you complete the measures, you send us your data. We then analyse it and send you charts showing your student data visually.

For staff: Schools and colleges tell us that they find this really helpful information about how autistic students are finding school and which aspects or lessons they found most difficult/easiest. They also find it a good way to show change over the period of the SCF-funded activity.

For autistic students: The analysed data can be used in discussion with students as part of your intervention with them - for example to highlight which aspects of school they manage well, or to explore why they feel differently to staff. Schools and colleges tell us that doing the measures with students prompts discussion and this is useful.

For schools: Because we provide analysed data in charts, schools and colleges can use this in reports to leadership, governors or to Ofsted as evidence of impact. Some teachers have felt this to be useful evidence to make a case for further investment in supportive activity.

We've written some [guidance](#) about using the data.

How does SCF analyse the data?

SCF analyses the data sent in by schools using Google Sheets - this enables us to do informal, descriptive analysis. This is not statistical analysis, but does provide you with a visual representation of your data, to help you understand issues and trends related to students' responses. Our [guidance](#) offers suggestions about how the analysis and charts can be used.

Can I use the impact information to show the impact of SCF-funded activity?

The analysis of the SCF impact measure data that we send to schools shows the change in engagement and well-being over the period of the funded activity. However, secondary schools and colleges are complex, busy environments and there are many interventions, events and issues which will impact on progress students make. Because of this, we talk about SCF funding contributing to any changes seen in the data rather than necessarily directly attributing any changes to the funded activity. The additional qualitative evidence we collect via the impact statement helps to triangulate the data, meaning that we can be more confident in the difference SCF-funded activity makes.

We have written some [guidance](#) which explains this more clearly and [on page 3](#) suggests ways to use this analysis.

Carrying out the measures

Where can I download the measures?

Recipients of SCF funding can access the impact measures from links that we send asking them to complete the measures at the start of their funded activity, and then again after 6 months.

We will also send them guidance for how to submit data, and how to use analysed data.

The impact measures are not available to schools and colleges who are not in receipt of SCF funding.

How do I select which students to carry them out with?

We ask you to select between 5 and 10 autistic students who will benefit from your SCF-funded activity. As soon as you submit your funding application, it's worth starting to think about which students will be involved or impacted by what you are planning to do. Participating students must be autistic but they can be any age, any level of ability, any

gender and they can have additional needs as well as autism. However, they must be students who will benefit from your planned activity.

Why do I need to assign an identifying letter of the alphabet to each student?

It is important that you do not use students' names when you submit your data to SCF, to meet data protection requirements. However, it is also important that we know which data belongs to which student:

- you will want to know which analysed data relates to which student so it is useful for your records and for discussion.
- for SCF impact measurement we need to compare students' ratings before and after funded activity.

Please assign an identifying letter to each student and make a record of this. The easiest way to do this is to make a note on the students' paper copy of the measure. Some schools and colleges find it helpful to make a note and save it somewhere securely. This is a useful template:

Student's name	Identifier

The identifier can be a single letter or combination of letters. For security, you should not use the student's initials.

How long do the measures take?

Each measure takes just a few minutes to complete. The engagement measures have just one rating and this is very quick - a few minutes for each student, depending on how much discussion it generates! The well-being measure (*How do I feel at school?*) requires the student to rate a number of aspects of school and may take a little longer: time to think of which aspects they want to rate (we've given you some examples), and then 5-10 minutes per student. It's possible to generate the aspects to rate as a whole group activity.

Schools and colleges who have used the measures tell us that the measures were quick and easy to carry out.

When do I carry out the measures?

We ask you to carry out the impact measures with students twice - once before you start your SCF-funded activity and then again afterwards:

- **Before you start:** before we release funds to schools and colleges there is a series of set-up tasks that schools and colleges are required to complete. This includes carrying out impact measures on a sample of students. To be ready for this, it's worth thinking ahead about which autistic students will be in your sample - who will benefit from the funded activity?
- **After the activity:** approximately 6 months after you start your planned activity, we'll send an email asking you to complete an impact statement, and to repeat the impact measures. In the email there will be links through to the relevant guidance and Forms.

There is guidance about when to carry out measures [here](#).

When do I send my data to SCF?

Funded schools and colleges carry out the measures once before starting SCF funded activity, and then again afterwards. Each time, data is sent to SCF using a Google Form.

Each time you send us data, we will analyse it and send it back to you in the form of charts and tables. We aim to do this within 6 weeks of receiving data.

How do I send in my data?

You send your data to SCF using simple Google Forms. There is one Google Form for the engagement measure, and a choice of 3 different forms for the well-being measure depending on how many situations you have chosen. There are links through to the Forms at the end of each Measure, and we'll also send the links in our reminder email.