



From Iain Ellis, Chair of the National Parent Forum of Scotland:

Welcome to our second newsletter, written by parents for parents. We hope you find it useful and informative. Please do share the newsletter with other parents in your school.

We were delighted to see so many parents/carers at our second annual conference in October. Feedback was extremely positive and included the following comments: "Very worthwhile day (even worth giving up a Saturday!)", "Very useful and informative to hear how schools and parent councils can maximise the benefit of parent involvement" and "Inspiring to hear so many positive experiences in schools".

If you were unable to attend, our conference report is circulating separately and can be viewed at www.parentforumscotland.org. If your child has additional support for learning needs, take a look at the report from our additional support for learning workshop which highlights many common issues. Arrangements for next year's event on 6 October are already underway!

Parent evaluations gave us a strong message about *Curriculum for Excellence*: clearer, jargon-free information, please! The factfile *Curriculum for Excellence: Overview of Key Terms* should help you. Initiated by the National Parent Forum at your request, it can be found at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Parentzone/cfe/index.asp>.

In 2012, we will see the introduction of the Children's Rights Bill into the Scottish Parliament, paving the way for the Children's Services Bill. These high-level changes take time to be felt at local level but there are opportunities for parental involvement throughout the process. The trick is in knowing when to have your say! We hope the information inside this newsletter will help you with all kinds of parental involvement.

With all best wishes for 2012,

Iain Ellis

Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland
Chair@parentforumscotland.org



Scottish Education Awards: Parents as Partners in Learning Nominations Now Open!

It's time to step forward and be counted! An exciting new category has been included in the Scottish Education Awards which reflects the crucial role of parents/carers in schools and in children's education. Do you know of a parent council, a parent or an organisation working with parents who deserves recognition for the way in which they have promoted Parents as Partners?

This could be:

- A parent council working in partnership with its own school to support an area of improvement or success for parents and/or children
- Parent councils doing something successful or innovative in their own school or in their own community
- A group of parents/parent councils getting together to bring about an improvement for children in their area
- A partner/third sector organization supporting parents to help bring about improvements for children
- An individual who has made a significant contribution to parental involvement in their own school, locally or nationally

Entries are now invited. The deadline is Friday 2 March. Please visit <http://www.scottisheducationawards.co.uk/> for further information.

Dates for your diary

- From now until Fri 2 March: Nominations for Scottish Education Award 'Parents as Partners in Learning' can be made. See front page for further details!
- Sat 25 February: Health and Wellbeing Parents' Conference, Stirling Management Centre. To book a place email: Anne-Marie.Lamont@educationscotland.org.uk
- Thurs 8 March: Enquire Conference, Musselburgh.
- Sat 24 March: Parents as Partners: Good Practice Event, Assessment and Reporting. Stirling Management Centre. To book a place email: LindsayJane.Murray@educationscotland.org.uk
- Sat 6 Oct: National Parent Forum of Scotland Annual Conference, Bishopbriggs Academy.

Consultation on...

- Jan-March: Consultation on National Parenting Strategy underway (see page 4).
- Jan-March: Scottish Government Consultation on system for safe adventure activities <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/01/04112146/0>
- Spring: For information on consultation events on the underlying principles of the new Children's Services bill, contact childrenserviceslegislation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
- May: Children's Rights Bill to be introduced to the Scottish Parliament.
- June: New School Handbook legislation to be introduced to the Scottish Parliament.

Local News and Opportunities...

School News

Is your school and/or parent council working creatively with partners? We'd love to share your stories with other parents – please contact us via enquiry@parentforumscotland.org.

- The Kilwinning Academy Cluster is fundraising for an outdoor residential experience for all cluster P7s as part of their transition to high school. Working with local businesses, fundraising and applying for grants, the Cluster plans to raise over £50,000 over three years. An associated Ambassador Programme for S4-S6s will also be funded.
- The parent council of Bellsquarry Primary School in Livingston is developing a resource to help parents of children with additional support for learning needs. Parent Council Chair Eric Lumsden explains: "As a parent of a child with dyslexia, I thought there was a need for support for parents on a peer to peer level. As I researched my child's needs more, I realised that if I had been able to speak to a parent who has already gone through this, it would have saved a huge amount of time, effort and worry". The exact nature of the resource is yet to be finalised – it might

be a parent who can advise other parents on a voluntary basis or a family support group.

- The Parent Council and staff at the Royal High School, Edinburgh organised a World of Work event for S4 pupils in October. Each pupil selected three career paths to discuss in small groups with parent volunteers from cluster schools who work in related fields.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Would parents in your school be interested in finding out more about how to help their children develop positive relationships, manage their own behaviour and take responsibility for their own actions? Education Scotland's Positive Behaviour Team (PBT) is currently undertaking a pilot project in Falkirk which offers parents/carers workshops on issues such as brain development, empathy and understanding, thoughts and feelings, resilience, attachments and relationship building as well as practical advice and support. Training, support and guidance in promoting positive relationships and behaviour can be arranged for parents/carers through local authorities and schools/learning centres. All training is fully funded through Education Scotland.

For further information please contact:

Maggie Fallon:

maggie.fallon@educationscotland.gov.uk or visit <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/index.asp>.

National Parent Forum of Scotland Update

The area representatives of the National Parent Forum met in Edinburgh on 26 November. Recently, Aberdeen City Council and West Lothian Council agreed to have parent representation with voting rights on their education committees. Some other local authorities have parent advisors on their education committees. To support these initiatives, we agreed the following motion at our meeting: "The National Parent Forum of Scotland welcomes the fact that a number of local authorities have agreed to have parental representation on their education/children and families committees. The National Parent Forum will encourage and support the introduction of similar strategic parental and pupil representation across all local authorities in Scotland".

The National Parent Forum recently hosted a focus group for parents on their current experiences of *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE). The first in a series of workshops to gain insights from parents on educational areas of interest, the focus group was attended by parents from four local authority areas with children in S1 and/or S2, most of them with children at both primary and secondary school. The National Parent Forum will take action points from the focus group and will share the findings with partners. A report will follow.

Representatives required!

We still have some vacancies in a few local authority areas. Please check our website at www.parentforumscotland.org for further details. If you would be interested in representing your area and can attend four meetings a year, alternating between Edinburgh and Glasgow, please get in touch with the Chair@parentforumscotland.org. Reasonable expenses are paid and a crèche can be provided.

Curriculum for Excellence Update

One of the priorities in the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Action Plan 2011/12 is 'enabling parental engagement at every level, and providing additional information and resources for parents where needs are identified'. Since publication of the plan, more information in plain English for parents on assessment, reporting and profiling has been published on Parentzone and publicised via the National Parent Forum and parent councils. Additional resources and information for parents, including some new films, are being prepared. These should be available at the end of January. Visit <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/> for more details.

Assessment

In response to parental queries, the National Parent Forum of Scotland asked for clarification from the Scottish Government on assessment.

• How has assessment changed?

Teachers now gather a wide range of evidence of what a child has learned and this helps to assess a child's progress in learning and their development in line with the expectations of *Curriculum for Excellence* experiences and outcomes in the eight curricular areas (<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/cfe/subjectsandknowledge/index.asp>), identify gaps and next steps in development. This evidence may include information from self-assessment, peer assessment, observation, tests, work-profiles etc. This information will show a child's depth and breadth of learning, knowledge and skills, and their ability to apply learning in new and unfamiliar situations.

• How will standards be maintained across schools and authorities?

Authorities will build on existing good practice of sharing standards to ensure that they are understood and shared and consensus is reached across schools and the authority. In addition an on-line national resource called the National Assessment Resource (NAR) will support teachers in understanding and sharing assessment practice. The NAR offers lots of examples of assessment approaches for teachers at each level and in each curricular area. A national system of quality assurance and moderation is being put in place to support national consistency in standards. For qualifications, teachers in secondary schools will already be familiar with internal verification practice as required by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

We have asked the Scottish Government to provide answers to more parent questions. These can be found at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone>.

News from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

Last October every secondary school received information from the SQA which included draft specifications for the new National 4 and 5 qualifications and copies of an updated **Parent Leaflet** and new **Teachers' Guide**. A new section on the SQA website www.sqa.org.uk/cfeformparents, specifically for parents and carers, also provides a jargon buster, a timeline and Mythbuster videos which answer some of the most common questions. You can also sign up for MyAlerts to receive e-mail updates.

Engaging Universities with Curriculum for Excellence

The Scottish Government and partners continue to engage with universities on *Curriculum for Excellence* so that young people can experience a smooth transition from schools and colleges into higher education. CfE's changing qualifications and the greater range of pathways to obtaining qualifications will have implications for universities as they consider setting their entry requirements. A National Parent Forum representative, who attended a meeting with university representatives, asked for clarity and transparency on university entrance requirements.

Pupil Profiles

Pupil profiles are a positive record of a pupil's achievements. They capture information on achievements inside and outside school for example hobbies and interests such as participating in sport or recognised awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh or the John Muir Award. All schools are working towards developing the first P7 profiles for all P7 pupils by June 2012. Education Scotland has been working with some schools to develop early examples of P7 profiling. These can be viewed on Education Scotland's website: <http://bit.ly/uxfLrV>. All schools will develop profiles for all S3 pupils by June 2013.

Curriculum for Excellence Facfile – Overview of Key Terms and Features

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the national framework which applies to schools in Scotland from primary age 3 to 18, wherever they are learning. It sets out what children, young people and adults should know, understand and be able to do, and what they should be able to do in order to succeed in learning, in work and in life.

This file explains some of the terms for use with CfE. You can visit our website at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone> for more information.

The Eight Curricular Areas – containing a range of examples:

- **Expressive Arts** – including art and design, drama, dance, music, media studies, creative writing, film and media, cultural heritage and contemporary, indigenous and traditional
- **Language** – including all forms of writing, reading and writing in Gaelic and English and spoken language skills, including listening and talking and Scottish Gaelic, Scots and Scottish Gaelic literature
- **Mathematics** – including problem solving, using numbers and understanding why
- **Physical and Health Education** – understanding and developing own and others' health, fitness, well-being, and personal and social responsibility, and developing own and others' confidence, competence and health literacy
- **Science** – connecting the natural world to science, technology, engineering and design, and understanding the Earth, human, scientific and social, biological, chemical and physical world
- **Social Studies** – including history, civics and geography in the past and present including history, geography, civics and human and business studies
- **Technologies** – including computing science, food, media, and design engineering, agriculture and other technologies

Curriculum for Excellence
Bringing life to learning and learning to life
June 2011 (September reprint)
The National Parent Forum of Scotland | SQA | Education Scotland | smarter scotland

Who's Who in Scottish Education



As part of an occasional series about people with key roles in education, we hear from **Lorraine Sanda, National Parental Involvement Co-ordinator**

"I came into parental involvement because I felt very strongly that we could only get it right for children when parents, schools, local authorities and others were talking to each other. I fell into parental involvement through the experience around my own children which I felt could have been better. I started off voluntarily, setting up a group of parents in my own local authority. I was then asked to do some consultation when parent councils were being proposed which led to employment first in a local authority, then by Learning and Teaching Scotland and now I have ended up in Scottish Government. Prior to that, I worked as a civil servant.

"I've got a great job – no day is the same. Now that I'm working within Scottish Government, it's about advising, thinking through and helping people who are devising policies and legislation, to make sure that parental involvement is part of the process. I work with people at all levels of Scottish Government, from colleagues who are working on *Getting it Right for Every Child*, to Ministers, making sure that they have the proper information that they need, so that we can all do parental involvement better.

"I'm currently busy with the outcomes of the School Handbook consultation. We're looking at how we can update 1980s legislation to reflect *Curriculum for Excellence* and also reflect where parents are today in Scotland. I also have quite a lot of involvement with the additional support for learning agenda. I have a personal interest and recognise how crucial it is to get this right.

"I've spent a lot of time over the last two years thinking about how to translate the messages of *Curriculum for Excellence* so that parents can understand them. How do we help parents to think about the benefits to their child and about what they can do as parents to support their child, both through schooling and beyond? The National Parent Forum takes up a lot of my time too. Parent councils told us quite strongly that they wanted a new national voice which reflected the new parent council. The National Parent Forum has taken on that role and we have all been working hard to realise that aim. It's great to see this finally coming to fruition after a number of years. It's about getting a voice which makes a difference to policy and to decision-making in Scotland. If we can create the right structure at national level, that will filter down and increase the aspiration of those at school level. If we can get it right, there are huge gains for all of us.

"I'd love to see the school level representation and partnership working better. I think parents don't realise how much of a voice, how much of an influence they can have. I'd like all of us to be working together so that we can say: 'We're in this together, this is about children, this is about our children's lives'. We're getting there but we've still got some way to go."

What's happening nationally

A National Parenting Strategy

What would help you in your parenting role? What do you think would ensure that organisations working with parents and families are as responsive and family-centred as possible? The Scottish Government is developing a National Parenting Strategy to provide an overview of policies and initiatives at national level which support parenting (covering parents, carers, anyone with a parenting role with children of all ages). This is intended to identify gaps and improvements for future development. From January to March 2012, local discussion groups are being held with those involved in bringing up children (parents/carers, children/young people, professionals). If your Parent Council is interested in holding discussions with parents in your area, please contact Clare.Collin@scotland.gsi.gov.uk to register your discussion group and ensure you have a briefing pack.

All Change in the Scottish Government!

A ministerial re-shuffle and the introduction of a new post of Minister for Youth Employment has resulted in the following line-up of specific relevance to children and young people: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning: Michael Russell (as before); Minister of Youth Employment (new post): Angela Constance, who will focus on drawing together all of the activities across Government to support youth employment; Minister for Children and Young People: Aileen Campbell; Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages: Alasdair Allan.

Skills Development Scotland: My World of Work website www.myworldofwork.co.uk

From February, a My Strengths questionnaire will be added to the My World of Work website which will help 12-19 year olds identify their skills and interests. It will then link young people to relevant careers information, learning/training opportunities and current job opportunities. There's also a CV builder and an interactive, video-based interview tool that allows school/college leavers to prepare for job interviews.

Useful Contacts Box

National Parent Forum of Scotland –
enquiry@parentforumscotland.org
www.parentforumscotland.org
<http://twitter.com/parentforumscot>

Enquire – the national advice service in Scotland for additional support for learning
www.enquire.org.uk

Education Scotland – more detailed information on *Curriculum for Excellence*
<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/>

Parentzone – information for parents on all aspects of children's learning
www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone

Scottish Qualifications Authority – for the latest information on qualifications
www.sqa.org.uk