**RESPONSE: Scottish Government response to OECD Review**

1. **Theme 1: Balance CfE so children and young people can fully benefit from a coherent learning experience from 3-18.**

**OECD  Recommendation**

**1.1 Re-assess Curriculum for Excellence’s (CfE) aspirational vision against emerging trends in education**to take account of evolutions in education and society: Scotland should consider updates to some of its vision’s core elements and their implications for practice, in particular, the role of knowledge in CfE; and define indicators aligned to the vision to help understand students’ progress across all four capacities set out in CfE.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT:** We will work with Education Scotland, SQA, the teaching profession, learners, parents and other key partners to build on the work undertaken in 2019 to refresh Scotland’s curriculum narrative. This will include re-examining core elements of its vision to take account of 20 years of curriculum design and delivery, and wider educational developments.

We will work with stakeholders to ensure the role of knowledge, skills and attitudes are more explicit and better integrated in the capabilities and attributes of the four capacities, to help understand learners progress.

**OECD  Recommendation**

**1.2. Find a better balance between breadth and depth of learning throughout CfE**to deliver Scotland’s commitment to providing all learners with a rich learning experience throughout school education: Scotland could consider how the design of CfE can better help learners consolidate a common base of knowledge, skills and attitudes by the end of BGE, and nurture and hone this base for them to progress seamlessly through Senior Phase and the choices its offers.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT**: We will work with partners including teachers, parents, young people, academics, and all parts of the system to find the point of balance between breadth and depth, considering how this evolves through the learner journey from the broad general education towards more knowledge and discipline based courses in the senior phase. We will provide guidance which supports schools to develop an approach which will work in their context.

**OECD Recommendation**

**1.3. Adapt the Senior Phase to match the vision of CfE**Scotland could consider adapting the pedagogical and assessment practices and the structure of learning pathways in the Senior Phase to enhance learners’ experience of upper-secondary education and help them develop CfE’s four capacities continuously.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT**: The Scottish Government will build on the work undertaken in 2018 on the Learner Journey and subsequent discussions at the Education and Skills Committee in 2019/20.  Specifically it will update senior phase approaches and learner pathways in order to enhance learners’ experiences across the four capacities of Scotland’s curriculum. This will include reviewing and updating guidance on learning and teaching and assessment practices where appropriate.

**OECD   Recommendation**

**1.4. Continue building curricular capacity at various levels of the system using research**By developing the environment of curriculum design support around schools, including in supporting exchange and collaboration between practitioners for curriculum design and experimentation within and across schools; and collaboration between schools and universities.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT**: Teachers should be supported to take innovative decisions about the curriculum, based on the findings of relevant research and methods such as professional enquiry. Actions to support this will include reducing class contact time (see Recommendation 3.1), supporting ever greater collaboration between teachers and schools through regional improvement collaboratives and intensifying school empowerment.

We will also consider whether existing professional learning in terms of curriculum can be enhanced while exploring how we can expand colleges and universities’ interaction with schools.

1. **Theme 2: Combine effective collaboration with clear roles and responsibilities**

**OECD Recommendation**

**2.1 Ensure stable, purposeful and impactful stakeholder involvement with CfE**. System leaders at national and local levels could continue encouraging the involvement of stakeholders (and in particular, students) with CfE by better structuring each engagement initiative they offer, clarifying its purpose, designing it accordingly, and letting stakeholder input inform decision making.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT:** We are committed to putting the voices of young people, parents, teachers and school leaders, as well as other stakeholders, at the centre of education policy development. We will ensure that impactful and representative engagement is integral to our implementation of the OECD’s recommendations, and that that engagement demonstrably shapes how changes are made.  Lived educational experience will inform and shape future policy development and decision making in Scottish education.

We will reconvene the Scottish Education Council, with a refreshed membership and renewed purpose, to support the delivery of the OECD’s recommendations as well as wider education policy as we move on from Covid-19. Young people will have seats on that Council and, to ensure that the voices of those who are most affected by any changes in education are always heard loudly and clearly in strategic discussions, a Children and Young People’s Education Council will be established to sit alongside the Scottish Education Council.

The Children and Young People’s Council will enhance and build on the Education Recovery Youth Panel.

**OECD Recommendation**

**2.2 Revise the division of responsibilities for CfE**. System leaders and stakeholders could revise the current allocation of responsibility for CfE, including responsibilities for its strategic direction, its reviews and updates, and the response to schools’ needs of support with curriculum issues. The revised allocation should be stable over time to fulfil Scotland’s commitment to shared ownership of CfE.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT**: The Scottish Government agrees that it is vital that the various agencies and institutions responsible for each aspect of the curriculum have the capacity, resources and ability to fulfil their responsibilities. Linked to our implementation of Recommendation 3.2, we will work with stakeholders to simplify policies and responsibilities to ensure greater clarity and coherence. Consideration around the division of responsibilities for the curriculum will be part of the reform of our national agencies, as set out in response to Recommendation 3.2.

**OECD Recommendation**

**2.3 Structure a coherent communication strategy to support developments of CfE**.

System leaders, with the Learning Directorate and Education Scotland at the forefront, could develop a communication strategy in support of CfE’s next developments and collaborate with practitioners, scholars and other CfE stakeholders as they do so.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT**: We are committed  to timely and effective communication. We will work with practitioners and system experts to ensure that communication of changes related to these recommendations is clear, timely, coordinated and succinct. We will re-continue work, paused by Covid-19, to engage further with the sector and explore further how the existing suite of curriculum documentation can be revised and refined to enhance clarity and access. There are very close links between this recommendation and Recommendations 1.1 and 2.1, and therefore we will work to implement those recommendations as a coherent package.

1. **Theme 3: Consolidate institutional policy processes for effective change**

**OECD Recommendation**

**3.1. Provide dedicated time to lead, plan and support CfE at school level**.  In support of the next phase of development of CfE, Scotland could consider the provision of additional dedicated and ring-fenced time for all teachers, for curriculum planning, for monitoring of student achievement and in support of moderation of assessment outcomes.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT:**We want teachers to have more time in the working week to support the creation of a curriculum that suits the needs of their school and pupils. The Scottish Government has already committed to seeing teachers’ class contact time reduce by 1.5 hours per week, and we will work with our partners in the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) to take forward discussions as to how this can best be achieved.

**OECD Recommendation**

**3.2 Simplify policies and institutions for clarity and coherence**. To align the institutional structures with clear ownership of CfE, Scotland could explore assigning leadership and development responsibilities for curriculum (and perhaps assessment) to a specialist stand-alone agency; and consider refreshing the remit of an inspectorate of education regarding CfE.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT:**In addition to this recommendation itself we note, in particular, the OECD’s view that having the inspectorate as part of an organisation that is also responsible for supporting school leaders, curriculum design and support, teacher professional learning and a range of other initiatives is an “unusual configuration”.

Therefore, we will:

* Move the role of inspection out of Education Scotland in a way that maximizes impact and helps to balance the dual need for local flexibility of provision alongside national consistency in outcomes.
* Consider replacing the SQA with a new, specialist agency responsible for both curriculum and assessment to ensure alignment in these functions.

We have appointed Professor Ken Muir to lead the work on how this recommendation should be implemented. Professor Muir will work with a dedicated and diverse advisory panel with a view to consulting widely and, ultimately, ensuring our agencies are designed in a way that maximizes support of excellence and equity for our children and young people.

**OECD Recommendation**

**3.3 Align qualifications, system evaluation and curriculum to deliver on the commitment of Building the Curriculum 5**. Scotland could first identify modes of student assessment that could be used in school and external settings at Senior Phase levels, in alignment with the four capacities and CfE philosophy; and second, re-develop a sample-based evaluation system to collect robust and reliable data necessary to support curriculum reviews and decision making.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT:**The Scottish Government notes the need to develop approaches to qualifications and assessment which are better aligned with the four capacities and CfE philosophy.  We look forward to the publication in August of the OECD’s working paper outlining possible options to enhance assessment and qualifications moving forward.

This recommendation links to work currently underway to respond to recommendations made by Audit Scotland regarding BGE data and health and wellbeing, and we are considering with partners as to whether/how we can change what data we collect to better reflect the 4 capacities.

Action in response to this recommendation will also include consideration of the status and role of the Inspectorate, Education Scotland and the SQA.  The intention to reform these agencies was announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills on 2 June 21.

**OECD Recommendation**

**3.4 Develop a systematic approach to curriculum review**. Scotland could consider establishing a systematic curriculum review cycle with a planned timeframe and specific review agenda, led by the specialist stand-alone agency.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT:** We have periodically reviewed elements of the Curriculum for Excellence - for example, the review of Technologies experiences and outcomes in 2016/17. Three reviews are ongoing at present on topic specific issues (race equality, LGBT equality, and rights education in the light of the incorporation of the UNCRC). These processes offer insights which we will use to develop an overarching review process for Scotland’s curriculum. Once implemented, the new review cycle would support our ongoing ambition for CfE to remain relevant and, as recommended in the OECD report, will reduce the need for ongoing guidance and clarifications, giving the system greater stability overall.

We will ensure all key partners are engaged in the design of the review process, and will ensure that it seeks to streamline processes and communication to prioritise the efficient operation of the system in schools and other education establishments.

**Theme 4: Lead the next steps of CfE with a long-term focus**

**OECD Recommendation**

**4.1 Adopt a structured and long-term approach to implementation**.Building on the system’s existing strengths, Scotland should consider how to take on board the  recommendations in this report as a coherent package rather than individual policy actions for the next steps.

**Initial SG response**

**ACCEPT**: We will work with practitioners, learners, parents and other key stakeholders to co-design a detailed implementation plan, to be published by early September.  The Curriculum and Assessment Board will play a key role in driving this work, alongside the Scottish Education Council and the new Children and Young People’s Education Council.

This implementation plan will set out the roles and responsibilities of all involved in delivering improvements, and the indicators to be used to measure progress and undertake systematic reviews of implementation.