



E-NEWS UPDATE SPRING 2014

Visit National Parent Forum of Scotland website

FROM IAIN ELLIS, CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND

We are pleased to start the year by providing you with some great new information leaflets about the National Qualifications. You can find 'Nationals: Assessment in a Nutshell' and 'Pointers for Parents and Pupils: Supporting Learning and Revision' [here](#). Every S3 and S4 parent/carer is to receive an envelope of information leaflets about the new National Qualifications, including these, via schools. Please ask at your school if you have not yet received this. [Email us](#) with any further queries or comments. We are very grateful to the Scottish Government and the Association of Directors of Education Scotland for their support. Several of our National Parent Forum area reps have S4 children - so we know how important clear, accessible information is. In this first year of the National Qualifications, we greatly appreciate how hard teachers and pupils are working.

At a recent launch event for our two new leaflets, S3 and S4 parents from Dumbarton Academy had the opportunity to gather information and to discuss the new qualifications with Scottish Government, Education Scotland, BBC Learning and Scholar. Feedback from the event was very positive, with parents welcoming the chance to fully engage. We hope to see more of this type of event-based, face-to-face parental involvement in schools across Scotland.

The National Parent Forum has been following and supporting the Curriculum for Excellence journey from the outset, raising your questions and issues, working with education partners to strengthen communication and interaction with parents. We will continue to do this. Please keep your queries and comments coming via the National Parent Forum communication channels listed below in the Contact Us box.

Yours in partnership,
Iain Ellis

NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND RESOURCES FOR THE NEW QUALIFICATIONS

The information leaflets for parents/carers and young people listed below are available on the National Parent Forum of Scotland [website](#). These resources have been compiled with the support of the Scottish Government. Feedback from parents and teachers has been extremely positive. We are preparing more resources, including additional revision material for National 5 subjects. Links and information from across Scotland will be added to our website's 'For Learners' section over the next few months. Please share helpful revision resources provided by your school with us and let us know what further information you would like by [emailing us](#).

- [The Learner Journey](#)
- [Nationals in a Nutshell: Summaries of National 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 Qualification courses](#)
- [Assessment in a Nutshell](#)
- [Pointers for Parents and Pupils: Supporting Learning and Revision](#)

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE UPDATE

- **Assessment and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)**
Curriculum for Excellence has introduced a variety of new types of assessment for the National Qualifications for the first time. This is resulting in workload concerns for teachers and pupils. We have

Contact Us

Join our database to receive this E Newsletter and other parental involvement information from the National Parent Forum by [emailing us](#) your contact details. Visit our [website](#). Follow us on Twitter and Facebook by clicking the icons at the top of this E Newsletter.

Scottish Education Awards 2014

Nominations wanted!
Deadline 21 February! Has a parent, staff member or project at your school moved the parental involvement in education agenda forward in creative and imaginative ways? Then consider entering them into the Parents as [Partners in](#)

raised these issues at the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board, with Ministers and with members of the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Group. We have been advised that the Scottish Qualifications Agency and Education Scotland are providing additional support and feedback in this area. One of the key messages is about rationalising assessment approaches, for example, so that several outcomes can be achieved in one piece of work, rather than in numerous individual assessments. We will continue to monitor this area of CfE. See our [Assessment in a Nutshell](#) for more information on assessment in the National Qualifications.

- **Assessment in the Broad General Education** The National Parent Forum's group on assessment approaches in the Broad General Education recently met for the third time. Our lead on the group, Joe McLachlan reports that "the group is progressing well, with participants reaching a shared understanding of the challenges faced by teachers, parents and pupils. A great deal of analysis and review has taken place. Summaries of the meetings, details of the remit of the group and information about the group members are available on our [website](#)." Assessment is a crucial area of CfE for parents and is at the heart of good learning and teaching. Whilst we recognise that unnecessary bureaucracy is to be avoided (see item below), we do expect information to be gathered on learners' progress throughout their school lives. It should be relevant and proportionate. The working group is looking at how progress can be shared regularly and in meaningful ways with parents and pupils.
- **Tackling Bureaucracy in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)** The Scottish Government working group on tackling bureaucracy in CfE which includes Joanna Murphy, Vice Chair of the National Parent Forum, has now published its report. It is available [here](#) and is complemented by a Ministerial blog by Dr Alasdair Allan on [Engage for Education](#).
- **Study Leave** There have been parent queries about study (revision) leave for the new National Qualifications. Study leave is a matter for schools and local authorities to decide; however, discussions with parents should be part of the decision-making process. The relevant guidance, which makes provision for study leave in relation to formal Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) exams, can be viewed [here](#). There are no exams for National 4s and prelims are not formal SQA exams so no specific provision is made for them in the guidance.
- **Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Information for Parents and Pupils** The National Parent Forum of Scotland will continue to work with the SQA to enhance the information for parents that is available on its parent [web pages](#). There is general information for parents about the National Qualifications [here](#). If you have any queries about the National Qualifications, about the new [Results Services](#) arrangements (Exceptional Circumstances consideration or re-marks of papers) or about the revised [literacy assessment arrangements](#), please contact the SQA on 0345 279 1000.
- **SQA Support for Teachers and Lecturers** As well as running over 300 events across Scotland for schools and local authorities, including subject specific ones, further development events with local authorities have been planned for some subjects which have prompted more queries. The SQA is also publishing subject-specific Question and Answer papers online to address teacher enquiries.
- **SQA Specimen Question Papers (exams)** These are now available for all National 5 subjects and can be found on the [SQA](#)

[Learning Award](#). These awards recognise excellence in education and also include such categories as: Commonwealth Games Legacy Award, Education Supporter of the Year, Global Citizenship, Headteacher of the Year, Creative Learning Award and Teacher of the Year. Make your nominations [here](#) by Friday 21 February at midnight.

Additional Support for Learning, ICT and Assistive Technologies

Many barriers to children's learning can now be addressed using ICT and assistive technologies. Internationally-renowned [CALL Scotland](#) specialises in this field and is holding a Family Fun Day on Saturday 26 April from 11am to 4pm. For more details and to book, visit the CALL Scotland [website](#) or read their latest [newsletter](#). CALL Scotland also offers information on using ICT to support pupils in the SQA Literacy Assessments, digital exams, the digital Books for All service and on the Scottish Government's current consultation on draft guidelines for '[Planning Improvements for Disabled Pupils' Access to Education](#)' in which ICT plays a significant role. CALL Scotland is planning an online seminar ('webinar') about the consultation in March.

Useful Contacts

[The National Parent Forum of Scotland](#) - creating a voice for Scotland's parents.

Education Scotland's [Parentzone website](#) provides you with up to date information about your child's education.

[website](#) under the subject heading. Remember to look at marking instructions too as these contain a wealth of information about what SQA examiners are looking for. From the end of February, the SQA will begin to publish Specimen Papers for the revised Higher qualifications which progress on from National 5 qualifications.

- **Resources for the new National Qualifications** Scottish Government recently made some funding available for schools to update their resources, including text books. Ask your school or local authority how this has been dispersed and used.

NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND IN ACTION

- **The Scottish Government's Languages Strategic Implementation Group** Our National Parent Forum rep on this group, Carol Snow, is keen to hear your views by [email](#) about the delivery of the 1 + 2 languages model. The Scottish Government's commitment is that every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue by 2020. The first language will be taught in P1 and the second will be delivered no later than in P5. Further information is available [here](#) and from [Scotland's National Centre for Languages](#).
- **Revised Higher Qualifications** There has been some media debate about whether the revised Highers (those which have been designed to progress from National 5 qualifications) or the existing Highers will be delivered in schools from 2014/15. The National Parent Forum of Scotland's position on the issue is: "We would expect all young people who successfully achieve the new National 5 qualifications to progress on towards the revised Highers, whether over one year or two years, because the revised Highers have been designed to enable pupils to make that progression. We expect schools and local authorities to be planning for this. It would be a matter of serious concern if decisions were taken not to deliver these revised Highers, without due consultation and engagement with parents and pupils to explain the consequences of this." Please do share your views on this with us [by email](#).

SURVEY ON THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES WITH DISABLED CHILDREN

A second survey is being conducted by Children in Scotland and for Scotland's Disabled Children, a coalition of disability and children's organisations. The survey results will enable Children in Scotland and for Scotland's Disabled Children to bring issues which are important to families to decision and policy makers. To complete the survey, please click [here](#).

CHILDREN 1ST PARENT/CARER RESOURCES

A really useful contact list of support and information organisations and helplines can be found [here](#). It covers the wide spectrum of services which are available to meet the needs of children and parents/carers. Details of websites and organisations which provide advice on legal matters, additional support for learning and education are included.

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE WEB INFORMATION

Education Scotland has created a one-stop shop for Curriculum for Excellence information on new web pages which can be found [here](#).

EARLY YEARS PROVISION AND SCHOOL MEALS

[Parents as Partners in their Children's Learning Toolkit](#)

[Parenting Across Scotland](#) offers information and support for families in Scotland.

[Scottish Parent Teacher Council \(SPTC\)](#) provides information for parents and carers.

[Enquire](#) is the Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning.

The [Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit](#) has been prepared to support dyslexic children and young people and contains sections for professionals, parents and young people themselves.

Run by Children 1st, the [Parentline](#) helpline provides support and information for parents/carers and families on 08000 282233.

As well as the increase from 475 to 600 hours per year of early learning and childcare for three to five year olds, the Scottish Government recently announced more support for families of younger children. By August 2014, free childcare provision will be available to every two year old from a workless household - approximately 8400 children. By August 2015, free childcare provision will be extended to 15400 children. From January 2015, P1-P3 children will have the option of free school meals.

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

It has now been confirmed that the National Parent Forum will have a place on the Scottish Government's GIRFEC Programme Board. In our last E Newsletter, we publicised a survey of parental knowledge of GIRFEC - we are delighted to report that over 800 parents completed the survey. Knowledge of GIRFEC is clearly patchy: 18% said they know a lot about GIRFEC, 27% said they know a little but 55% said they know very little or nothing about GIRFEC. Fiona Nicholson, our Shetland rep who is also our rep on the GIRFEC Programme Board, is now seeking views about what information is required and how this information will best reach parents. Email your suggestions to Fiona via enquiries@parentforumscotland.org For further information about the work of the GIRFEC Programme Board, click [here](#). The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, which embeds the principles of GIRFEC in legislation, will soon be debated in the Scottish Parliament and a decision will be taken by MSPs. If the Bill is passed, the increase in statutory early learning and childcare provision from 475 hours to 600 hours for three and four year olds will be rolled out in August 2014. Many local authorities and centres are currently consulting parents/carers on possible delivery models. Different models are emerging across the country, ranging from three hours and 15 minutes each term-time weekday, to two full days per week to three hours each term-time weekday plus two weeks of holiday club provision.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

'[Recognising and Realising Children's Rights](#)' is a new resource on children's rights which has been prepared by Education Scotland for adults who work with children. It extensively covers the specific Rights and includes a reflective audit for schools and centres to use to ensure that awareness is raised of the Rights.

SEEKING YOUR VIEWS: HOW CAN WE HELP?

As we work on our new website, we are keen to hear about the kind of information you would like to access there. We are receiving more and more correspondence via our website from parents, carers and schools, asking us about issues as diverse as school placement requests, school trips and healthy eating in school. Please help us to help you by letting us know what information you would find useful on our website by [emailing us](#).

Kinship Care All across Scotland, thousands of people such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and family friends care for children because their parents are unable to do so. People who look after children in these circumstances are called "kinship carers". Citizens Advice Scotland's Kinship Care Service provides free, confidential advice on legal and financial issues through local Citizens Advice Bureaux, via the Kinship Care Helpline (0808 800 0006) or via their [website](#). Other kinds of support for kinship carers are available through Children 1st's [National Kinship Care Services](#).

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