



## E-NEWS UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2014

Visit National Parent Forum of Scotland website

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

Welcome to the autumn E-News Update, our first newsletter of the new school year. The National Parent Forum is continuing to develop our partnership with Children in Scotland, and we now have a Policy Manager and Administrative and Information Assistant in place, based in the Edinburgh office. The office provides support to our volunteers as well as promoting parental engagement in general, so please get in touch if there is anything you need help with, or wish to discuss.

It has been a busy period for the National Parent Forum and Scottish education generally, with exam results day on 5th August. This marked the first round of results for the new National Qualifications, and we were delighted to hear that pupils had achieved excellent results across the country. This is testament to the hard work undertaken by learners and staff, supported by encouragement and reassurance from parents.

Looking ahead, we are now turning our attention to the new Highers, as this will be the last year that pupils can sit the old Highers. We will continue our support until the new qualifications are fully established, and have developed resources to help parents and learners get to grips with the new Highers.

We have plenty of events, focus groups and other engagement opportunities taking place over the next few months - keep an eye on the NPFS website, Twitter and Facebook for all the latest.

Wishing you all the best for the academic year ahead.

Yours in partnership,  
Iain Ellis

### PARENTS CONNECT AT THE SCOTTISH LEARNING FESTIVAL

This year's Scottish Learning Festival takes place on 24th- 25th September at the SECC where we will team up with the SPTC to deliver 'Parents Connect' - the first ever parent-focused event to take place at the Festival. There will be a range of opportunities for parents to take part and engage, including Speakeasy sessions on a range of topics including Getting Parents Involved in Schools, Supporting Health and Wellbeing, and Qualifications in a Nutshell.

Register to attend the SLF: [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/slf/](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/slf/)

### NATIONAL PARENT FORUM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

We will be showcasing our work at our annual conference on October 4<sup>th</sup> in Bishopbriggs Academy where Sir Ian Wood, chair of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages will be the keynote speakers. This free event is open to all, with this year's theme being 'Preparing our Children with Skills for their Future'. There will be interesting and informative workshops for parents from SQA, My World of Work, Children's Parliament, Education Scotland, Scotland's National Centre for

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### NPFS Vacancies - Get Involved

We currently have vacancies for representatives in the following areas: Angus, Argyll and Bute, Western Isles, Fife and South Ayrshire. If you are involved in a Parent Council in these areas and are interested in representing your local authority at the

Languages, and many others.

The conference is free to attend, with a crèche and a programme of activities for school-age children available. Spread the word!

Further information, including how to book your place: [NPFS website](#)

## COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPING SCOTLAND'S YOUNG WORKFORCE (WOOD COMMISSION)

The Final Report from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce was launched on 4 June 2014 and was welcomed by the NPFS. The Commission highlighted the need for the right mix of academic and employability skills for each individual child and we will be working with the Scottish Government and strengthen parental involvement throughout this key area. Further information on the Commission can be accessed via [Wood Commission](#)

## CfE MANAGEMENT BOARD REPORT ON THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

NPFS welcome the CfE Management Board's [report](#) reflecting on the first year of the National Qualifications. While good results were achieved overall, it appears that an overly cautious approach led to a high level of assessment, creating unnecessary stress for young people and parents. Moving forward, it has been recommended that NPFS:

- Support partners and teachers to understand and take account of parents' perspectives and concerns
- Work with national bodies to help them develop material and information to support better understanding amongst learners and parents of the benefits of the new qualifications and the different assessment arrangements
- Provide Parent Councils with information to help them engage with and support the headteacher and school management team.

NPFS will also continue to explain and promote the value of Nationals 1-4 with parents, monitor parental experience of the new qualifications and assessment experience, and support parents by providing them with information which helps them engage with their child's school and understand the arrangements that are being put in place.

## CHANGES IN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

NPFS welcome the Scottish Government's announcement that annual funded provision for 3- and 4-year-olds will be extended to 600 hours, and 2-year-olds who are looked-after or are from disadvantaged families will also be eligible for a funded place. However, there have been reports that parents are having difficulty accessing their 600 hours in a way that suits their needs. We are currently conducting research into this issue and the findings will be shared in due course. The statutory guidance was published on 1 August and can be found [here](#).

NPFS Early Years representative Julie Wild said, "The introduction of the new early learning and childcare entitlement has been challenging for many areas of the country. Parental consultation and engagement is essential as we continue to develop and refine the models of provision locally"

national level, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please [contact](#) the NPFS office or your local authority for further information.

## School Estate Consultation

The Scottish Government has strengthened the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to establish more rigorous requirements before a local authority may propose closing a rural school. The requirements for all school closure proposals have also been strengthened. Further information: [Scottish Government - School estate consultations](#)

## School Meals

Schools across Scotland are preparing to deliver free schools lunches to children in Primary 1 to 3. From January 2015, Primary 1 to 3 children are to be offered the option of a free lunch at school to help encourage healthy eating habits and save families around £330 a year per child. Please contact your school if you have any questions.

## Enquire - Young People's Blogs

Enquire, the Scottish advice service for ASL, publishes blogs about additional support needs written by young people from across Scotland.

Recent blogs have looked at the experiences of a young person making the transition from a small rural primary school to a large mainland high school. Other articles have focused on the experiences of young carers and families affected by imprisonment.

## UPDATE ON NAMED PERSON/GIRFEC IMPLEMENTATION

NPFS is a member of the national group which supports implementation of the GIRFEC provisions, and we are also working in partnership with the Scottish Government to help ensure that parents are informed, and are involved in the process. It is expected that this work will result in materials for parents, co-produced by parents. Children and young people have also worked with the Scottish Government to develop a new [Wellbeing for Young Scots](#) website.

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## NON-RESIDENT PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Children in Scotland and Families Need Fathers Scotland have conducted research into problems non-resident parents experience in dealing with schools and nurseries. This can cause distress and more importantly is in conflict with the intentions of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. Children in Scotland and Families Need Fathers Scotland will be publishing a guide for schools on law and best practice in respect of non-resident parents. In the meantime they have produced a briefing which can be accessed [here](#).

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## COMMISSION FOR CHILDCARE REFORM NEEDS YOUR VIEWS

Do you have views about childcare in Scotland? The Commission for Childcare Reform is inviting parents to have their say via a short survey. It should only take 3-5 minutes to complete, and the findings will be used to inform the Commission's recommendations on reforming childcare in Scotland. The survey addresses the reasons why parents choose not to use childcare, so it is relevant for those who don't, or no longer, use childcare too.

Click [here to take part in the survey](#).

Find out more about the [Commission for Childcare Reform](#).

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## ACCESS TO EDUCATION FUND

The Scottish Government has announced a new £1.5m fund which aims to reduce the barriers to learning experienced by pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. It will achieve this by addressing one, or more, of the following areas:

- Helping schools to address barriers to learning caused by difficulties in accessing appropriate school resources, IT, or clothing;
- Enhancing a school's capacity to provide trips, outdoor learning or other activities which will boost learning and are an integral part of the school curriculum;
- Enhancing a school's capacity to provide coaching and mentoring programmes for disadvantaged students to support them to become fully engaged in school and community life;
- Enhancing a school's capacity to deliver parental engagement programmes to support parents to support their children; and
- Enhancing a school's capacity to develop or deliver innovative learning experiences which will raise educational attainment, promote attendance and encourage positive engagement.

The deadline for applications is 10 October 2014. Further information, including application guidelines and forms, is available at:

[Education Scotland - Access to Education Fund](#)

## Useful Contacts

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

[Children in Scotland](#) is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland.

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

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

[My World of Work](#) Scotland's national careers advice website. Find work, skills and learning opportunities.

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

[Parentline](#) helpline provides support and information for parent / carers and families on 0800 282233

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

[SQA](#) helps people to fulfil their potential and to achieve their ambitions by providing a wide range of high quality, internationally recognised qualifications and associated services.

## HIGHERS IN A NUTSHELL - NOW AVAILABLE!

We are pleased to announce that new resources in our popular *Nutshell* series are now available to download from the NPFS website. *Highers in a Nutshell* are clear, concise guides which aim to help parents and learners understand the new qualifications. The leaflets summarise each subject, outline the skills learners can expect to gain, and provide links to further information, e.g. past papers.

As some schools are delaying the introduction of the new Highers for certain subjects until next year, we recommend that parents speak to their child's school directly to ensure they are clear about which Highers pupils will be sitting.

The new Higher Nutshells can be accessed on the [NPFS website](#)

## INSIGHT - BENCHMARKING FOR EXCELLENCE

Insight, is a new online tool which will be used by secondary schools and local authorities from September 2014 to identify areas of success and look at where improvements could be made. The aim is that it will bring about improvements for pupils in the senior phase.

Insight is being developed by the Scottish Government in partnership with Education Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and School Leaders Scotland (SLS).

For more information, visit: [Insight - Scottish Government](#)

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## KIDS IN THE CAR CAMPAIGN

The National Parent Forum is lending its support to The Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland for their road safety campaign, 'Kids in the Car', which focuses on the influence adults' driving can have on their children's safety when they become drivers themselves. The campaign is based on the premise that every time adults get behind the wheel with their children in the car, they're giving them a lesson which could save their lives in the future.

Transport Minister Keith Brown said: "This activity is so important in helping parents and carers keep their children safe here and now by exercising safe driving behaviours, but it is also critical to their future safety when they get behind the wheel, given what we now know about children's crash risk mirroring their parents' crash risk."

The campaign draws on Early Years and Road Safety research which demonstrate that children's future prospects are influenced to a large extent by their parents' and carers' behaviour from a very young age. This extends to all areas of life, including driving. Parents are already very aware that they are role models to their children, but this does not always include their vital role when they're in the car.

To find out more about the campaign, visit: [Kids in the Car](#)

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## SEEKING YOUR VIEWS - HOW CAN WE HELP?

Our website is being continually developed, and we are keen to hear about

## Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR)

Education Scotland has launched a new resource for Primary One teachers to help them identify and assess children who are most at risk of developing difficulties with reading and writing. POLAAR should be used with any child whom their teachers may consider to be struggling with early literacy development and should be undertaken from the early months of P1. Further information is available at: [Education Scotland - POLAAR](#)

## Family Engagement Resource

The Scottish Government commissioned a new web resource to support education practitioners access the very latest Scottish, UK and international research evidence to support effective family engagement strategies. It has a particular focus on engaging with vulnerable families and those living in our more deprived communities, as well as engaging with fathers and looked after children. The resource also provides an opportunity for schools and parents to share their own successful practice around family engagement and many schools and organisations are

the kind of information you would like to access there. Please help us to help you by letting us know what information you would find useful by [emailing us](#).

already showcasing their approaches within this resource: [Engaging with Families](#)

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