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## E-News Update Spring 2015

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**E-NEWS UPDATE SPRING 2015** [Visit National Parent Forum of Scotland website](#)

### SPRING NEWSLETTER 2015

I hope everyone enjoyed the spring break and that, for those of you with children sitting exams, revision is going well and stress levels are under control. If you are looking for resources to help support your child in their exam preparations, be sure to have a look at our revision guides for the new Highers and our updated National 5 revision guides.

Here at the National Parent Forum of Scotland we aim to ensure the parental voice is heard in all discussions around education in Scotland. We gather parents' views through focus groups, web surveys and through our local representatives and their networks. Recently, we heard from parents about additional support for learning and their views on what 'attainment' means to them. If you are interested in taking part and having your say, there are lots of opportunities coming up - see below for details. If you'd like to get in touch with your local representative and find out what's happening in your area and how you can get involved, you can find their details here.

Over the past few months, we provided an authentic parental perspective at a range of meetings and events, all of which were attended by our volunteer parent representatives. We gave evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee on parental involvement in raising attainment; facilitated and spoke at the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Learning Event; took part in the Raising Attainment For all Conference; and shared views at the Commission for Childcare Reform's workshops, as well as attending our regular meetings of the GIRFEC National Implementation Support Group and the National Digital Learning Forum, amongst many others. We also took part in a wide range of local events and conferences at which we shared our publications and had lots of very interesting and useful conversations with parents. Our reps have all been all over the country as part of the judging process for the Scottish Education Awards. It has been heartening to see the amount of good work that is taking place out there in our schools and communities.

Please email [office@npfs.org.uk](mailto:office@npfs.org.uk) if you would like more information about any of these meetings, or indeed any other information about NPFS.

All the best for the rest of the academic year!

Yours in partnership,

Iain Ellis, Chair

## Survey Reports

Many thanks to everyone who filled in our recent Early Learning and Childcare, and ASL Surveys.

The Early Learning and Childcare Report can be found [here](#). We have sent the results to Ministers and look forward to discussing with them further.

Going forward, we plan to work with nurseries to ensure that information on CfE is communicated to parents; with local authorities to improve the consultation process; and with the GIRFEC team to ensure information for parents is effective and available.

The ASL report can be found [here](#). We used several of the comments in our written evidence to parliament on the attainment gap. We have sent the summary onto Ministers and are also writing to the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People, in conjunction with many other organisations, expressing our concerns.

## Upcoming Focus Group

On May 26th we will be hosting a focus group in Glasgow for parents. We are very interested in discussing how you have found the first year of the new Higher Qualifications and how the roll out of the N5 Qualifications has progressed.

We value your reflections of how you feel that the session 2015/16 has gone and ways that could help the progression for the next year of pupils sitting N4, N5 and Higher qualifications.

The NPFS will in turn feedback this parental perspective at a national level, to the CfE Management Board, members of which include Scottish Government, Education Scotland and the SQA.

## GIRFEC EVENT - June 20th, Glasgow

Parents – what do you need to know about GIRFEC? Come along to this event and have your say. Participants will help make sure all families in Scotland know what GIRFEC is, and understand what will be happening next year, and create design work that will go to the Scottish Government and will be used in their communications strategy.

The event is aimed at parents, children and young people, with separate activities for each age group. It will be an engaging and interactive day of discussions, idea

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## Vacancies

We currently have vacancies for representatives in the following areas: Argyll and Bute, East Ayrshire, Fife, Midlothian and the Western Isles. Please contact us or your local authority for further information.

## New Rep

NPFS are delighted to introduce a new representative in Angus. 'My name is Kirsty Stevens. I have 2 daughters. One is in P4 and the other in pre-school and starting P1 after the holidays. The girls go to a rural school with 35 pupils. I am a mental health nurse and try to juggle everything together and I hope that I get the balance right like most other parents!!' Kirsty can be contacted on [angus@npfs.org.uk](mailto:angus@npfs.org.uk)

## The Education Bill

The Education (Scotland) Bill has been introduced

development, designing and planning. It will be more active and creative than a traditional focus group. At the end, there will be an opportunity to present each group's ideas. You'll be guided through the process, and supported to use your knowledge and experience.

As a thank you for taking part, parents will receive a gift voucher. All eligible travel costs will be reimbursed and catering will be provided throughout the day. A crèche will be provided for under-5s if required. Numbers are limited so if you are interested in attending please contact our office for more information.

## Commission For Childcare Reform

We have been pleased to support the work of the Commission over the last year. The Commission have now published their interim [report](#) and are gauging reaction to the proposals which include:

- That up to 50 hours per week of free or subsidised childcare should be available throughout the year, and the cost to families should be capped.
- The initial focus of any new money should be on ensuring affordable childcare for those living in or near poverty.
- Funding for childcare, including through the tax and benefits system, needs to be simple, fair and easy to understand for all who access it.

We look forward to reading the final report in June this year.

## Learning with technology

A National Digital Learning Forum (NDLF) was established last year and comprises representatives from a range of educational establishments, local authorities, third sector and others. The purpose of the forum is to engage stakeholders in exploring and recommending approaches to digital learning. John Lamont, our Clackmannanshire representative, provides a parental perspective to the Forum.

The NDLF welcomes parental involvement in the online community that is being formed and there is an opportunity to have your say on the NDLF blog – [what do you want to talk about?](#) There are also plans to issue regular updates on what is happening in relation to digital learning and teaching across Scotland.

## Education Awards

The Scottish Education Awards celebrate the hard work and success which takes place in Scottish education. They recognise the achievements of people who dedicate their lives to children and young people and

to the Scottish Parliament. It contains provisions on: closing the attainment gap; additional support for learning and children's rights; the right to request Gaelic medium primary provision; and other topics, such as ensuring that councils have a Chief Education Officer in post.

We have contributed to a parents' leaflet explaining the Bill that can be found [here](#).

## Education and Culture Committee - Closing the Gap

As part of its work on [educational attainment](#), the Education and Culture Committee has been looking at how parents and schools can work together to raise pupils' attainment, particularly those who attainment is lowest. [Written evidence](#) to the Committee was submitted, and our Chair, Iain Ellis appeared to give evidence at the [meeting on 31 March 2015](#). The Committee has also commissioned a short survey seeking the views of parents, the [report](#) of which is now available.

## Scottish Apprenticeship Week 18-22nd May

Modern Apprenticeships are jobs open to anyone aged 16 or over. They combine a real job, with real pay, and training that leads to an industry-recognised qualification. There are more than 25,000 new Modern Apprenticeship places in Scotland each year, ranging across industries from engineering, ICT, construction and life

showcase the valuable work and innovation in Scottish classrooms. Lots of our reps have been involved in judging the awards this year, including Cheryl Burnett our South Lanarkshire representative who said this about the experience:

'Recently I was asked to take part in the Scottish Education Awards as a phase 1 judge. This was a fantastic experience which truly opened my eyes to the lengths that some individuals will go to enhance childrens' education. I was judging the Best Teacher category and read through pages of nominations from all over Scotland, from young people, peers, and parents who all thought that their teacher went above and beyond their job description - there are some truly inspirational people out there. Every person on that list deserved to be recognised and narrowing it down was a difficult process. Being part of this amazing experience is one that I would love to do again.'

### Tackling Bureaucracy

Our Vice Chair, Joanna Murphy is a member of the Curriculum for Excellence Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy. The group issued a follow up [report](#) in March setting out key actions and messages to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy in schools.

The report states that schools should involve parents in developing more simple and effective means of reporting that emphasise quality of engagement rather than reams of paperwork. The report contains a link to our report for parents [Sharing Learning, Sharing Assessment](#) which takes account of parental perspectives for more streamlined and effective reporting to parents.

### Education guide for refugees and other New Scots

The New Scots Strategy education working group has produced [a simple guide](#) on Scottish education to support refugees and others arriving in Scotland. The guide includes useful information for parents about: when children and young people attend school; the support services offered within schools; details of the curriculum areas and the importance of health and wellbeing. There are also details of where to seek further information in the local area or online.

### Read, Write, Count: Literacy and Numeracy Campaign

The Scottish Government is preparing for the formal launch of its Read, Write, Count literacy and numeracy campaign later this year. The campaign, for P1-P3 children and their parents, will build on the success of the Play, Talk, Read campaign in the early years.

sciences to food and drink, tourism and retail - and could provide a great start to your child's career. Find out more [here](#).

### 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.

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

[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.

Every child in Scotland will have access to a library of suitable books and educational materials. Sessions to support parents will be run locally to build a bridge between school and home and there will be a particular focus on investment in our most deprived communities. We will be one of the key national partners for this important and exciting campaign. Watch this space for further news in our summer edition.

Are you the parent of a 16+ year old? The Scottish Apprenticeship week highlights the benefits of apprenticeships bring to businesses, individuals and the economy.

### Instrumental Music Implementation Group

At the end of June 2013 the Instrumental Music Group reported to the Scottish Government with a list of recommendations. The Implementation Group was then formed to see the recommendations through and their final report was published earlier this year. Our East Dunbartonshire representative, Douglas Chappelle, was involved in the work of these groups and has said the following:

'We have successfully raised the profile of instrumental music tuition in Scottish schools. Councils who were charging for tuition while students study for National Qualifications in the instrument all stopped doing so, going some way to addressing inequalities across Scotland. I was already well aware of the benefits of learning an instrument, during my time with the Instrumental Music Group then the Implementation Group I have watched my oldest daughter develop as a flute player, from the first hesitant notes to performing at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow. I suspect that long after the stresses of exams pass it will be experiences like these that she will look back on most fondly.

It is worth remembering that your local council's instrumental music service is a discretionary service. If your children are not learning an instrument please try to find out about the service in your area as music has a massive impact on the lives of young people.'

### Revision in a nutshell

Exam revision time? Have a look at our revision guides for the new Curriculum for Excellence Highers. The leaflets provide a clear summary of what you need to know for the exam, including links to specimen papers and other useful sites. You can find them [here](#).

We have also updated all of our [National 5 Revision nutshells](#) for 2015 to include the past papers and up to date resources.

### Old versus New : A Guide to National Qualifications

In partnership with SQA, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Partnership has

### Exam Help

My World have Work have put together a useful [page](#) featuring advice on where to start with studying and tips to take some of the stress out of revising.

### More revision resources

Bright Red Publishing have developed and produced Study Guides for the new Curriculum

produced a guide to national qualifications in Scotland.

This guide shows how current and old qualifications relate to one another in terms of their SCQF level. The SCQF level of a qualification provides a way of comparing how demanding or difficult the learning involved in achieving a qualification is. This table can be used by anybody with a need to understand National Qualifications normally awarded at school. The leaflet is available in hard copy upon request or to download from the SCQF [website](#).

### Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

The SQA have collated lots of information for Parents and Carers on one [page](#). With links to [Study Guides](#), useful [Exam Tools](#), as well as a handy [guide](#) to the new qualifications, it is a useful resource.

Additionally this [Jargon Buster](#) could be helpful if you're struggling to understand the new terminology.

### Parentzone Scotland

[These](#) pages from Parentzone Scotland have lots of tips on how you can help your child prepare for exams and supporting study at home. There are sections on managing time, encouraging study and keeping well as well as lots of useful links.

for Excellence qualifications, and have also worked with Edinburgh Napier University to create [www.brightredbooks.net](http://www.brightredbooks.net) to further support Scotland's students and teachers.

### The SCQF in your SQA Exam Results

A short film explaining what the SCQF level & credit points information on SQA exam certificates means is available for parents/carers and learners to view on the SCQF [website](#).

### Exam Stress

NHS provides [information](#) for parents and carers on how you can look after your child's wellbeing during this stressful time.

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