



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

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2015

It looks like 2015 will keep us all busy! We have been trying here at NPFS to understand and get involved in the big issues that we think will affect parents and their children's education. As always, we don't pretend to speak for every parent, but we try to make sure that there is a parent at all the main tables where discussions and decisions are being made that will affect our children. We try to make sure a range of parent views are heard, but also keep you informed of what we think is important.

For 2015, there are some big issues that will affect all of us. Firstly, we are entering a difficult time with the budget restraints across all local authorities affecting our schools. Locally parents should be consulted and Parent Councils have the right to information about how the education of the children in their school will be affected. You need to be in discussion not only with your school but also with your authority, and find out how budget cuts will impact on your child's education. The other big focus across education right now is improving attainment and tackling inequality. We will be holding focus groups soon to get some more parental perspectives on what this means and how they think it is measured. We want to cut through the jargon and find out what this means for parents and their children. Schools and local authorities will be turning their attention to what they need to do to fulfil the recommendations in the Wood Report, now known as *Developing the Young Workforce*.

Ask what your school is doing to make sure that the right mix of vocational and academic opportunities are on offer so that all young people get the benefit no matter what they do when they leave school. If you need any help understanding any of this, or how to get involved with any of these issues in your school, get in touch with our office and we will see if we can advise you. Remember, we all benefit when parents get involved, but most importantly it's our children's education and they benefit most.

All the best for 2015!

Yours in partnership,

Iain Ellis, Chair

NPFS CONFERENCE REPORT AND PRESENTATIONS.

If you missed the NPFS annual conference, or attended but would like a reminder, then [visit our website](#) to read the conference report and view some of the workshop presentations and the keynote speeches from Sir Ian Wood and the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Dr Alasdair Allan.

EVIDENCE TO EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON BUDGET CUTS

NPFS provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament Education and Culture Committee's scrutiny of the Scottish Government's draft budget for 2015-6 in relation to primary and secondary schools. We emphasised that parental involvement makes a crucial difference to attainment levels, and raised parents' concerns about the effect of budget cuts on pupils' learning experiences. You can view our submission [here](#). The Committee have now published their [report](#). We welcome their recommendations, particularly in relation to Local

Contact Us

Join our database to receive this E News Update and other relevant 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.

NPFS Vacancies - Get Involved

We currently have vacancies for representatives in the

recommendations, particularly in relation to Local Authority decision making, and the extent to which parents can become involved.

WOOD COMMISSION ON DEVELOPING SCOTLAND'S YOUNG WORKFORCE

The Wood Commission investigated how Scotland could produce better qualified, work-ready young people with relevant skills which match employers' needs. The Commission's [report](#) looks at ways of increasing employment opportunities for young people and ensuring high-quality vocational education, for example through stronger links between schools and FE colleges. The Commission's findings were discussed at the NPFS annual conference, where Sir Ian Wood stated how important he judged parents to be in supporting the transformational change needed. The NPFS is currently in discussion with various bodies in how we can play our part -- representing parents fully. Watch this space!!! The Scottish Government joint response to the Commission's report - in the form of an implementation plan - was published at the end of 2014 and can be found [here](#).

1+2 LANGUAGES LEAFLET

This new leaflet provides advice for parents on the new languages policy which means that all pupils in Scotland will learn a language from Primary 1 and another language from Primary 5. It contains answers to questions such as why should my child learn other languages or what about learners with additional support needs. If you would like a copy of the 1+2 leaflet for yourself, your school or parent council please [click here](#).

SURVEY FOR PARENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

ENABLE Scotland is inviting parents with learning difficulties/disabilities from across Scotland to take part in their survey. It aims to find out what support parents find helpful, and what other forms of support they might need. Please pass on the link to anyone you know who may be interested: <http://www.npfs.org.uk/2014/11/24/enable-scotland-family-support-project-2/>

READ ON GET ON

This campaign aims to get all children reading well by the time they leave primary school. It follows on from concerns that too many children in Scotland are leaving primary school unable to read well, particularly the 1 in 5 children living in poverty. There are four strands of action on enjoyment of reading, early years, schools and supporting parents and families to read at home. Everyone can do something – for example, 10 minutes a day reading with a child makes a huge difference. You can find out more on the campaign website www.readongeton.org.uk

NPFS GIRFEC REPRESENTATIVE

representatives in the following areas: Angus, Argyll and Bute, Western Isles, Midlothian and Fife. If you are interested in representing your local authority at the national level please contact the NPFS office or your local authority for further information.

New Reps

NPFS are delighted to welcome onboard new representatives in Aberdeenshire, Highland, Moray, South Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire.

Eleanor and Aileen who will jointly represent Moray, have written the first ever NPFS blog post which can be found [here](#), introducing themselves and explaining why they decided to volunteer.

'Joining the Parent Council has met my expectations and I've really enjoyed the experience, so jumped at the chance of becoming involved with the National Parent Forum. I'm keen to learn and be involved in any way I can.'

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.

The new [BBC Bitesize](#) site brings together in one place all the BBC's formal education content, covering all the main secondary subjects, and also new primary guides.

Children in Scotland is

Fiona Nicholson, NPFS rep from Shetland, attended the Children in Scotland annual conference in November. She sits on the National Implementation Group for GIRFEC and was asked to speak alongside Alan Small from the Scottish Government team responsible for Information Sharing, and Ross Drummond, Perth & Kinross Council. The session was *GIRFEC Implementation of the Named Person Commitment - addressing the concerns* and was well attended with 64 delegates from all areas of education, social care, health and the third sector. Fiona said: "I was pleased to be asked to speak at the CiS conference to a range of delegates involved in our children's upbringing. I felt that it was important for the voice of a parent to be present." The NPFS is working with the Scottish Government GIRFEC team to develop information for parents and families, including some myth busting on the Children and Young Peoples Act.

GUERNSEY LOOKS AT SQA QUALIFICATIONS

Eric Lumsden (NPFS' West Lothian rep) was part of a delegation led by the SQA, to Guernsey, taking part in presentations to the Guernsey Minister for Education, Education Department and various employers' representatives. There was considerable interest in the recent Scottish education reforms and Curriculum for Excellence. In October of this year, TESS reported that adopting Scotland's approach to education was the top choice among Guernsey's state-school staff with 31% approval, despite fears it could lead to difficulties in recruiting teachers from England. Guernsey's Education Director, Alan Brown (who was born in Dundee), was reported in TESS as stating that "the island shared Scotland's philosophy and principles in such areas as the early years, curricular development and school improvement". Eric Lumsden, who is a member of the SQA Advisory Council as a Parent Representative, stated that it was a great experience, looking at the education system in another area of the UK and there is no doubt that many people in Guernsey are in admiration of the Scottish system and the breadth of opportunities it provides to our young people.

[GIRFEC 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

[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.

MAP OF ASN SERVICES

Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, recently launched a new map of services aimed at parents and carers. The development of the map was one of 21 recommendations from the Doran Review - the strategic review of learning provision for children and young people with complex additional support needs.

The map features 20 different categories of 1,000 education, access to education and family support services. Teresa Catto, a parent from Edinburgh and founder of Autism in Scotland, a forum for parents and carers of children with autism, explains why she will be using the resource. "Parents are often bewildered by the new world they find themselves in when they have a child or young adult with additional support needs. A

members in their area they have a link to a young person with additional support needs. A central information point will be incredibly useful and will increase how empowered parents feel. I will definitely be recommending the 'find a service' database put together by Enquire to the parents I support across Scotland." The map can be accessed at <http://enquire.org.uk/find-a-service>

CARE INSPECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

The Care Inspectorate are looking for parents / carers with recent and relevant personal experience of using an early years service to become inspection volunteers. Volunteers work closely with the Care Inspectorate's teams of specialist inspectors and together they help spot where things need to improve, help keep children safe and ensure that the rights of children receiving care are respected and their needs met. Visit their site [here](#) to find out more.

MY WORLD OF WORK

My World of Work have produced an excellent new parent's site with lots of information for you to help support your child as they go through school and make choices about their future. From school subject choices and university courses to looking for a job and Modern Apprenticeships, they have advice articles, tools and videos to help both you and your child. There's also advice for you if you're studying or working. They've brought together a list of key dates too that will help you plan when to help your child as they progress through school. <http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/section/parents-and-carers>

SEEKING YOUR VIEWS - HOW CAN WE HELP?

Our website is being continually developed, and we are keen to hear about 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](#).

SQA awards.

SQA has produced [this](#) series of short films that showcase the value and flexibility of its wider achievement awards. The awards – which are available in a number of subjects such as employability, volunteering, and even Scottish Studies – complement SQA's National Qualifications.

Cabinet Changes

Angela Constance has replaced Mike Russell as Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. We welcome Angela Constance into her new post and are looking forward to working with her and building on the good working relationship NPFS had built with Mike Russell.

E enquiries@parentforumscotland.org W parentforumscotland.org  [@parentforumscot](https://twitter.com/parentforumscot)  [parentforumscotland](https://www.facebook.com/parentforumscotland)

Copyright © 2014 The National Parent Forum of Scotland, all rights reserved.

[Want to unsubscribe or change your details?](#)

Powered by [Drop Design](#)
[Mailer](#)