 **March 11th**

**Premier Inn, George Street, Glasgow**

1. **Present**

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| Tony Rafferty | Aberdeen City |
| Colm O’Riordan (Deputy) | Aberdeen City |
| Bob Jones | Aberdeenshire |
| Sheona Craig  | Clackmannanshire |
| Jill Sloan | Dumfries & Galloway |
| Mel McGill (Deputy) | Dumfries & Galloway |
| Mary O’Connor | Dundee City |
| Alison Bowyer | Edinburgh City |
| Joe Campbell | East Ayrshire |
| Douglas Chappelle (Co-opted) | East Dunbartonshire |
| Gordon MacDonald | East Dunbartonshire  |
| Joe McLachlan | East Renfrewshire |
| Simon Cunningham (Deputy) | East Renfrewshire |
| Margaret Leitch | Falkirk |
| Linda Bradbury (Deputy) | Falkirk |
| Carrol Herbertson | Fife |
| Joanna Murphy (Chair) | Glasgow |
| Richard Porter (Deputy) | Glasgow |
| Fergus Weir | Highland |
| Owen Derrick | Inverclyde |
| Eleanor Symon | Moray |
| Ann MacDonald | Nah-Eileanan Star |
| Billy Gibson | North Ayrshire |
| Jason O’Flynn | Perth & Kinross |
| Debbie Newlands | Renfrewshire |
| Fiona Nicholson (Vice Chair) | Shetland |
| Morag Leslie Smith  | South Ayrshire |
| Cheryl Burnett | South Lanarkshire |
| John Rice (Co-opted) | South Lanarkshire |
| Iain Ellis | West Dunbartonshire |
| Eric Lumsden | West Lothian |

**Apologies**

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| Jim Campbell | East Ayrshire |
| Saddah Aziz | East Lothian |
| Barrie Sheppard | North Lanarkshire |
| Charlotte Harrison | Orkney |
| Clare Carroll (Deputy) | South Lanarkshire |
| Julie Wild (Co-opted) | Stirling |
| Eric Lumsden | West Lothian |

**Vacancies**

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|  | Angus |
|  | Argyll and Bute |
|  | Borders |
|  | Moray |
|  | Midlothian |

**Also in attendance**

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| Clair Halliday | NPFS Admin and Info Assistant |
| Joan Mackenzie (Minutes) | NPFS Admin and Info Assistant |
| Ronnie Summers | SQA |
| David Leng & Ralph Donaldson | Scottish Government |
| Laura Ross | Scottish Government |

**2. Chair’s Welcome & Update**:

* Joanna Murphy, Chair, thanked everyone for coming. Everyone introduced themselves in acknowledgement of new representatives attending the meeting for the first time.
* Joanna asked for reps to let her know if they are interested in contributing to particular tasks e.g. proof reading sections of the PI Act report.
* Reps were also asked to let the admin team know of any anticipated costs and reminded everyone to claim any outstanding travel expenses. It is important that reps claim these before the year end so that no one is out of pocket, financially - funding rules are becoming tighter so it won’t be possible top settle these after the year end.
* It is important that reps communicate any meetings that are attending and complete a meeting record sheet. Reps should inform the office if they are unable to attend scheduled meetings.
ACTION: Clair to email a copy of the meeting record sheet.
* There are two new nutshells (Career and Digital) – copies will be sent out when available. Another three are almost complete (apprenticeships, creativity and ASN). There are still plans to draft an early years nutshell but the final content/format has yet to be agreed.
* ANQ Group (Barrie Shepherd) – a statement is being prepared regarding assessment and changes to National 5 qualifications.
* The NPFS Action Plan is being drafted.
* SDQF will need to get the PINS leaflet soon. Other things are being added to their framework, including showing wider achievements such as Duke of Edinburgh.
* NPFS funding has been confirmed for the next year.
* NPFS financial accounts will be finalised in March and will be made available for scrutiny.
* The Ministers Reading Challenge is to be expanded into secondary schools. Sheona has volunteered to represent NPFS in this.
ACTION: Margaret is to pass the relevant contact details to Clair.
* Joanna mentioned that she was asked to give a presentation in Serbia later this month.
* There is budget available if reps are interested in attending any conferences, requests will be considered on an individual basis.

**3. Update on GIRFEC**

* Fiona confirmed that there was no additional information following what was covered in a recent email.
* There will be further consultation on information sharing and draft guidance before Summer recess.

**4. Minutes and Matters Arising**

* Minutes from 28th January 2017: approved by \_\_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Gaelic Medium Education: There has been a request in Mull that has gone straight to second stage. Joe also mentioned that he was having a chat with interested parents in East Renfrewshire next week.

**5. Ronnie Summers (SQA), Evaluation of new qualifications**

Ronnie, and colleagues Susan and Charles, from the SQA asked for reps’ opinions and comments on a range of questions relating to secondary education. A full write-up is being prepared by the SQA but questions and feedback included:

* The transition from primary into secondary - the majority of comments outlined positive experiences.
* Impressions of years S1-3 - several reps outlined their own experiences and that of parents they knew. The general consensus seemed to suggest that young people are challenged in S1 and S2 but are often “marking time” in S3 before a massive jump in learning in S4.
* When asked about what’s expected in terms of skills, comments led to Ronnie summing this up with “information but not enlightenment.”
* Choosing options – parents often don’t understand the structure of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) broad general education and there can be problems with the number of subjects on offer. Clearer information is required.
* The demands of S4, 5 and 6 can be a heavy burden for young people.
* Clarification is required over which past papers should be used.
* The SQA website was acknowledged as being very difficult to navigate but the SQA app was mentioned as a big improvement.

ACTION: Ronnie is to look into providing links to NPFS nutshells.

* It was noted that qualifications are changing so NPFS are looking forward to seeing the full proposals relating to this.

ACTION: Ronnie will attend another NPFS meeting to clarify how this is moving forward – further details will be available at the end of April. Reps were also invited to send Ronnie any further comments on the questions.

**6. David Leng (Scottish Government), Standardised assessments.**

* David Leng and Ralph Donaldson gave a presentation on the new standardised assessments. Their presentation covered the rationale behind the assessments, the selection process for the system provider, an outline of how the on-line assessment works and how the results will be used.
* There was some debate over the need for these assessments and the potential confusion and/or over-assessment of children if local authorities continue with their own assessments. It was stated that the hope is that local authorities will recognise the quality and accuracy of these assessments and focus on these only.
* Current tests look to see if a child has learnt what the teacher is trying to teach them - these are to have a wider scope to measure what children know rather than just what they are taught. This can be useful information for teachers e.g. if a P1 is in advance of the P1 programme and is being held back. There are also no time restraints to the assessments and they can be completed in multiple sittings.
* He acknowledged that these assessments were only to be used to aid/provide additional input to the teacher’s assessment. As they only deal with 3 elements of the curriculum (reading, writing and numeracy), they are not to be used in isolation. There then followed some debate about whether parents would have the opportunity to see the results.

ACTION: David will arrange for a copy of the presentation to be sent to reps and come back to another NPFS meeting after the summer to discuss these issues. He will also bring the teacher focused material at this time.

**7. Equally protected**

Fiona provided an overview of the report “Equally Protected? A review of the evidence on the physical punishment of children.”

This report was commissioned by the NSPCC Scotland, Children 1st, Barnardo’s Scotland and the Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland. It examines the effects of the physical punishment of children and calls for “Scotland and the rest of the UK to comply with international human rights law and to prohibit all forms of physical punishment”.

**8. Laura Ross (Scottish Government), STEM**

Laura asked for opinions on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) issues. The Government is consulting on its approach to delivering a high quality STEM education and training across the education, training and skills system.

Although the formal consultation is finished, there are some concerns that some areas may require further scrutiny. This will go on to inform future strategy. Discussions included:

* Lack of available resource and budgets.
* Under-utilisation of parents and the role they could have.
* Recruitment and training of STEM ambassadors.
* The importance of addressing any fears around maths early in primary school.

**9. Review of the Parental Involvement Act**

* The proposed recommendations for the Review were discussed and changes were made to several recommendations. These are still pending feedback from various stakeholders and will be amended and re-distributed when complete.

**The next meeting will be the AGM on Saturday 3rd June 2017 (Glasgow).**