



the National Parent Forum of Scotland

3rd June

The Studios, Hope Street, Glasgow

1. Present

Tony Rafferty	Aberdeen City
Colm O'Riordan (Deputy)	Aberdeen City
Sheona Craig	Clackmannanshire
Mel McGill (Deputy)	Dumfries & Galloway
Gordon MacDonald	East Dunbartonshire
Saddah Aziz	East Lothian
Joe McLachlan	East Renfrewshire
Simon Cunningham (Deputy)	East Renfrewshire
Alison Bowyer	Edinburgh City
Carrol Herbertson	Fife
Joanna Murphy (Chair)	Glasgow
Owen Derrick	Inverclyde
Ann MacDonald	Comhairle an Eileanan Siar
Billy Gibson	North Ayrshire
Charlotte Harrison	Orkney
Debbie Newlands	Renfrewshire
Cheryl Burnett	South Lanarkshire
John Rice (Co-opted)	South Lanarkshire
Julie Wild (Co-opted)	Stirling
Iain Ellis	West Dunbartonshire
Eric Lumsden	West Lothian

Apologies

Bob Jones	Aberdeenshire
Jill Sloan	Dumfries & Galloway
Mary O'Connor	Dundee City
Jim Campbell	East Ayrshire
Douglas Chappelle (Co-opted)	East Dunbartonshire
Margaret Leitch	Falkirk
Linda Bradbury (Deputy)	Falkirk
Richard Porter (Deputy)	Glasgow
Fergus Weir	Highland
Alex Dunbar	Moray
Barrie Sheppard	North Lanarkshire
Jason O'Flynn	Perth & Kinross
Fiona Nicholson (Vice Chair)	Shetland
Morag Leslie Smith	South Ayrshire
Clare Carroll (Deputy)	South Lanarkshire

Vacancies

	Angus
	Argyll and Bute
	Borders
	Moray
	Midlothian

Also in attendance

Clair Halliday	NPFS Admin
Joan Mackenzie (Minutes)	NPFS Admin
Andrew Bruce	Scottish Government
Danny Gallacher	SEEMiS
Gillian Evans	South Ayrshire
Heather Grossart	North Ayrshire

2. Andrew Bruce, Deputy Director, Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic, Scottish Government

- Andy Bruce thanked the NPFS for its commitment and provided an overview of his team's structure, responsibilities and priorities. These include:
 - Curriculum - breadth and depth.
 - Senior phase – core skills and qualifications.
 - Promoting Gaelic language - including culture and the arts.
 - National qualifications – although there has been criticism recently, priorities are literacy and numeracy and there is an ongoing commitment to breadth, depth and enjoyment.
- The DFM also has responsibilities for higher/further education and apprenticeships etc, as well as outside education in children services.
- Children are at the centre of three key policies: Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).
- Key initiatives include Read, Write, Count, First Minister's Reading Challenge, Maths Week, 1+2 and STEM.
- Following the Governance Review announcements, there will be a more detailed response to the Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

The following points were raised during the Q&A:

Unit assessments

- Unit assessments cannot be removed without assessing that part of the course in an alternative way – it needs to be re-balanced in either coursework or within the exam. Fallback is being retained for a limited period until N4 is improved.
- The issues relating to “fallback” were discussed (this is the facility for students to achieve a N4 qualification if they fail the N5, as a result of completing the relevant assessments). The difficulties include:
 - Ensuring that students are not losing fallback if they need it -
 - Ensuring that schools are not putting too many students into N5 that are not prepared for it, whilst also giving students the opportunity of challenging themselves in order to achieve it.
 - Ensuring that students are not required to complete N4 modules/assessments due to school timetabling constraints - only borderline students should complete the assessments.
- Reps voiced concerns over the uncertainty that surrounds another year of change and suggested that a plan for these changes, with a risk assessment and process for completion, would help clarify things.
- The fit of N4 / N5 was also discussed, as there are concerns that the gap between them is too great – N4 needs to be seen as a better value qualification.
- It was suggested that a 1-page summary of the available options would be helpful i.e. sitting N4 before sitting N5 or taking N5 over two years.

Standardised assessments

- The difficulties surrounding assessments were discussed, as well as the issues in communicating results from the new standardised assessments.

Teacher recruitment

- There was an acknowledgement that the recruitment of teachers and senior management is essential - ways of encouraging new routes into teaching are being investigated.

ACTION:

- Andy Bruce will distribute a 1-pager, with timescales, to provide clarity on strategy and will come back to the NPFS with information on parental access to Standardised Assessment scores.

3. Danny Gallacher, Chief Executive, SEEMiS

- Danny outlined plans to provide an improved service that will offer efficient communication solutions across the country. Current systems often use the child as a courier but this can be unreliable and there are security issues around data confidentiality. They are not planning to close off any existing channels, but want to develop a digital solution because the majority of people now have access to the Internet.
- Although research into an online service has taken place in England, covering school information, school holidays, transaction, academic progress and behaviour, they will be undertaking similar research in Scotland to verify this. They have spoken with local authorities and will be speaking to parent groups; they have commissioned IPSOS Mori to set up focus groups with a wide demographic.
- They are looking to formalise Groupcall text messaging, security through MyGovScot and ensure parents can only access their own child through MyGovAccount. They have also been asked to develop a placing request module.
- The service could be delivered through a portal on the local authority website or offer support if there is already one in place.
- The first stage is to have a road map of delivery; the second stage is to design the delivery so it's appropriate for users. In terms of timescales, it is estimated to take approximately 18 months to develop the new generation SEEMiS and the contract is likely to be awarded in October.

ACTIONS:

- Danny said SEEMiS would come back to consult when they have the road map.
- Joanna highlighted that this forms part of ongoing developments, under Recommendation 33 of the Review, and asked reps to get in touch if they

were interested in getting more involved. Reps were also reminded that it was important to make use of digital communications as a rep, such as the closed discussion space on Facebook.

- As part of the SEEMiS research, IPSOS Mori will be conducting a focus group with NPFS reps.

4. Follow up on the Review and the year ahead

PI Review

- Joanna provided an overview of the launch event, which had been very successful, and commented on the positive response the report had achieved.
- There will be further responses from Scottish Government following the Governance Review announcements.
- We have a huge opportunity to raise the NPFS profile by responding to the interest in the Review. Work now has to start on taking it forward: ensuring the recommendations are progressed and achievements are monitored.

ACTION:

- An executive summary document with the Review recommendations will be drafted for parents.

Communication

- Other communications have slipped due to the increased workload from the Review but we will be returning to normal.
- Parent council work will start in August and we will be looking to progress the collaboration with local authorities.
- The NPFS will create a glossary of abbreviations to ensure clarity in communication.

ACTIONS:

- Reps will receive a box of Review reports to distribute among their parent councils.
- A presentation providing background on the NPFS and an overview of the Review will be put together, so that reps can use it if/when required.

NPFS Conference

- The plan is to have the NPFS Conference after Christmas, towards the end of the financial year, to give the Governance Review time to bed in.

Governance Review

- The NPFS will be ready to respond to the Governance announcements. This will be based on the NPFS submission but reps were asked to continue to communicate opinions and feedback from parents.
- The forum discussed some of the issues and potential outcomes, including PEF funding.

ACTION:

- Joanna will word a response following the Governance announcements and reps have been asked to respond promptly to her email to confirm they are happy with it.
- Julie will check the policy and reporting structures around PEF spend and outcomes.

5. AGM (See separate minutes)

6. Minutes

- The minutes for the forum meeting on 11th March were proposed by Tony Rafferty (Aberdeen City) and seconded by Billy Gibson (North Ayrshire).

7. Reps National Work Roundtable

- The reps provided an overview of the groups where they represent the NPFS. Any recent conferences or training attended were also included.

ACTION:

- A list of these groups will be compiled and made available.

8. AOB

- Gaelic Medium Education – East Renfrewshire council has been approached.
- A parent has made an enquiry about the Equality Act and how to address it without marginalising any parent groups. This also links in with a national group Charlotte and Saddah will be attending.

ACTION:

- Reps have been asked to consider the issues involved and email their thoughts to the office by 20 June.

The next meeting will be on Saturday 30th September 2017 (Edinburgh).