



the National Parent Forum of Scotland

29th January, 2019

Dear Mr Swinney,

As you are aware, *Recommendation 21* of our *Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006* was to publish a joint interim progress report with Scottish Government and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES). We are delighted to outline the significant progress that has been made.

The recommendations to Scottish Government and national agencies have been incorporated into the actions in *Learning Together: national action plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021*. The one exception (*Recommendation 12*) is being actioned with the Scottish Government Supporting Learners team.

Full details have been provided as an appendix. It is encouraging that *Learning Together* has gone beyond the scope of the review in several areas.

There is less evidence for progress on the recommendations to local authorities. The NPFS discussed the recommendations with the Scottish Parental Involvement Officer Network (SPION) and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) with a view to future plans and research, but progress has understandably paused. This is largely due to the Empowering Schools work.

However, *Recommendation 27*, which relates to local authority parental engagement strategies, is encompassed in *Learning Together* and there is also ongoing work with SEEMiS in regard to *Recommendation 33*.

The recommendations to schools are very much encompassed in the work of the Empowering Schools reforms. It is expected that the reforms will fully implement these, and we look forward to reporting on this in a full progress report at the end of this year. The Review outlined the criteria for effective Parent Councils and this has been utilised in *Learning Together's* actions pertaining to equalities (actions 29 and 30).

Best wishes,

Joanna Murphy.

Joanna Murphy, Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland

NPFS Recommendation	Corresponding Learning Together Action
<p>1. The Scottish Government should consult on a range of significant amendments to the Parental Involvement Act (2006) and the accompanying statutory guidance. Following this consultation, the Scottish Government should introduce a Bill to modernise, extend and strengthen the legislative framework on parental involvement.</p>	<p>1. Joint commitments to enhance and improve parental involvement and engagement will be included within a joint CoSLA and Scottish Government agreement. This will include a commitment to ensure that headteachers work collaboratively with their Parent Council, wider parent forum and school community on substantive matters of school policy and improvement, based on the principle of co-production</p> <p>2. The Scottish Government will bring forward proposals to improve statutory and best practice guidance on parental involvement and engagement. This will be accompanied by a package of training and information materials. The guidance and training package will underpin a collaborative approach to parental involvement matters and will aim to encourage and support parental engagement in learning.</p>
<p>2. As part of its consultation on amendments to the 2006 Act, the Scottish Government should propose that the legislation be extended to early years.</p>	<p>33. Parental involvement and engagement will be reflected in the new national standards for early learning and childcare settings, expected to take effect in 2020.</p> <p>43. Education Scotland will work with the Care Inspectorate to develop a new shared inspection framework for early learning and childcare settings. This will be implemented in 2019 and will include an appropriate focus on parental involvement and engagement.</p>

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<p>3. All major Scottish Government policies, strategies and frameworks in relation to early years and schools should take full account of the importance of parental involvement and engagement.</p>	<p>5. The Scottish Government will ensure that the National Parent Forum of Scotland and other national parent organisations are involved in the annual review of Scotland's National Improvement Framework for education.</p> <p>6. The Scottish Government will work with national parent organisations to develop a "Policy Maker's Toolkit on involving parents" by the end of June 2019. The toolkit, which will be targeted at policy-makers and strategic managers at national and local level, will focus on how to support co-design and collaboration with parents in matters of policy and strategic planning</p> <p>7. National guidance on Pupil Equity Funding will highlight the importance of collaborating with parents in planning and decision-making processes relating to the funding.</p> <p>8. Between 2018 and 2021 the Scottish Government will work with national parent organisations to raise awareness of participatory budgeting as an innovative and effective mechanism to involve parents, particularly those who face additional barriers.</p> <p>40. The Scottish Government will retain parental engagement as one of the key drivers within the National Improvement Framework.</p> <p>46. As part of the annual National Improvement Framework cycle the Scottish Government will gather, analyse and publish</p>

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	key performance information on parental involvement and engagement on an annual basis and throughout the timescale for this plan.
4. The Scottish Government should work with key national partners to review and update the National Parenting Strategy in light of recent policy developments and frameworks.	17. The Scottish Government will continue to work with delivery partners to further develop and implement a range of commitments set out in the National Parenting Strategy.
5. The Scottish Government and key national agencies should seek to work with national parenting organisations and parents in the development and review of publications relating to early years and schools. Communication materials to parents should reflect the key principles set out in the Parental Communication Plan for the National Improvement Framework.	<p>10. From June 2019 onwards all national communication materials for parents will be developed in line with the key principles within the National Improvement Framework Parent Communication Plan. The principles are simplicity and clarity; transparency; relevance; partnership; flexibility and timeliness.⁵ This commitment is made by Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the National Parent Forum of Scotland, the Association of Directors of Education, the General Teaching Council of Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.</p> <p>27. The Scottish Government will work with parent groups to ensure that national education policy documents, strategies and guidance documents are fully “parent friendly”. This will include active steps to engage with groups that we have failed to involve in the past. It will include detailed consideration of socio-economic circumstances as well as a wide range of equalities issues.</p>

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<p>6. The Scottish Government should ensure there is a measurable increase in parents' access to proven, evidence based family learning programmes and interventions that support improvements in learning at home.</p>	<p>19. The Scottish Government will invest in the Parent Club marketing campaign as a single integrated marketing approach to all parental audiences across learning, health and other policy themes. The learning theme within Parent Club will run from Autumn 2018 and will build parents' confidence in how to adopt learning activities into their daily lives. Parent Club will also be independently monitored and evaluated among parents by May 2019.</p> <p>20. The Scottish Government will continue to invest in a package of national programmes to support parental engagement in learning including Bookbug, Read, Write, Count and the Deputy First Minister's Holiday Maths Challenge.</p> <p>21. Education Scotland will publish examples of good practice on learning at home by March 2021.</p> <p>24, By March 2019 Education Scotland will publish professional learning resources and case studies to support practitioners in their work to continually improve parental engagement and family learning</p> <p>25. By the end of 2019 Scottish Government will develop plans to assess the impact of the range of parental engagement and family learning programmes as supported by the Attainment Scotland Fund and Schools Programme.</p> <p>34. In the early years we will increase support for evidence-based family learning programmes in order to embed this in the early learning and childcare support for families facing</p>

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	disadvantage. As part of this commitment we will include a module on parental involvement and engagement in an online national programme of career-long professional learning on early learning and childcare
7. As part of the Governance Review, the Scottish Government should ensure that parents are represented on any new regional boards.	39. The Scottish Government will work with local authorities, Regional Improvement Collaborative Leads and national parent organisations to ensure meaningful parent stakeholder involvement in relation to the priorities for the RICs
8. The Scottish Government should ensure that governance and funding arrangements for education help to address the full range of barriers that prevent parents becoming more involved in their child’s school, including financial or capacity reasons.	<p>16. The Scottish Government will work with local authority partners to increase access to home-school link workers and similar roles by the end of 2019. The government’s investment in Pupil Equity Funding will continue to provide schools with opportunities to employ their own workers where the school concludes that a link worker will support the school’s aims. Work will be undertaken with local authorities to widen access to home/school link workers, to monitor progress and to evaluate impact.</p> <p>23. The Attainment Scotland Fund and Pupil Equity Funding will continue to provide funding to schools from 2018 onwards. Schools will continue to be able to tap into these funds to arrange family learning programmes and to fund joint activity with early learning and childcare settings.</p> <p>26. The Scottish Government will conduct an Equalities Impact Assessment and Councils] – gender and socio economic Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment in relation to this plan. The Scottish Government will consider equalities issues in key programmes and campaigns such as Parent</p>

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	<p data-bbox="1131 234 1928 344">Club, Read, Write, Count, the First Minister’s Reading Challenge and the Deputy First Minister’s Holiday Maths Challenge.</p> <p data-bbox="1131 384 2024 603">51. The Scottish Government, through the Attainment Scotland Fund, will provide funding to the Child Poverty Action Group in 2018/19. This will help to promote awareness of the financial barriers that pupils from low income families face, demonstrate the ways in which these barriers prevent full participation and provide practical steps to address those barriers.</p> <p data-bbox="1131 643 2029 860">52. The Scottish Government will work with regional partners to share advice and guidance on ways to engage with families living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. This will include the Toolkit for Parent Councils on the Cost of the School Day developed by the Child Poverty Action Group and the National Parent Forum.</p>
<p data-bbox="203 900 1055 1046">9. The Scottish Government should consider further legal or policy reforms to encourage and support parental leave and flexible working to allow parents to engage with their child’s learning and related activities within the school.</p>	<p data-bbox="1131 900 1995 1230">15. In early 2019 the Scottish Government will convene a national working group to explore practical, effective ways to make it easier for parents, families and wider communities to volunteer in early learning and childcare settings or schools. The group, involving third sector organisations, employer organisations, volunteering organisations and agencies, will seek to ensure that volunteering opportunities in schools and early learning and childcare settings are meaningful and sustainable.</p>

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<p>10. The Scottish Government should continue to work with local authorities to ensure that the Parent Forum, including Parent Councils, are fully included in a meaningful way and at a consistent level in decision-making processes in relation to key national initiatives and investment programmes, such as Pupil Equity Funding.</p>	<p>6. The Scottish Government will work with national parent organisations to develop a “Policy Maker’s Toolkit on involving parents” by the end of June 2019. The toolkit, which will be targeted at policy-makers and strategic managers at national and local level, will focus on how to support co-design and collaboration with parents in matters of policy and strategic planning.</p> <p>7. National guidance on Pupil Equity Funding will highlight the importance of collaborating with parents in planning and decision-making processes relating to the funding.</p> <p>31. The joint work to improve national guidance on parental involvement and engagement will be supported by an additional investment in a package of training, awareness raising and advice materials. The contents of this package will be developed by end June 2019 and rolled out via Regional Improvement Collaboratives, local authorities and parent groups during the course of financial year 2019/2011. The package will be designed to support collaborative leadership at all levels and skills relating to trust and partnership.</p>
<p>11. The National Parental Engagement Steering Group should be retained and its role should be strengthened as a working group helping to influence, challenge and guide national policies.</p>	<p>45. By the start of the 2019/20 academic session the Scottish Government will create a new National Network on Parental Involvement and Engagement, drawing together practitioners, academics, researchers and policy makers to review evidence, share expertise and build new connections. The aim will be to improve the connections between policy, research expertise and what is actually happening on the ground. As part of this commitment, the government will identify champions for</p>

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	parental involvement and engagement amongst parents and carers, families, practitioners and support workers.
12. The Scottish Government should review the effectiveness of the 'communicating with parents' section of the Additional Support for Learning code of practice.	Being taken forward with the Supporting Learners team in the Learning Directorate.
13. Guidance for practitioners on a range of parental engagement themes should be updated through the 'Engaging Parents and Families: A Toolkit for Practitioners'.	<p>3. By March 2021 Education Scotland will develop and publish a range of further additions on parental involvement within its professional learning resources including the Engaging Parents and Families Toolkit. These additions will support further improvement in parental involvement by schools and early learning and childcare settings. Priority will be given to case studies from sectors currently under represented within the current suite of support materials.</p> <p>28. As part of its work to extend and strengthen the Engaging Parents and Families Toolkit, Education Scotland will review and update the existing section on working with parents who face barriers to their involvement by March 2019.</p>
14. Education Scotland should take further steps to promote the benefits and ways for parents to get involved in their child's learning.	9. Education Scotland will continue to work with stakeholders to review and refresh the content of Parentzone Scotland. The aim will be to help parents support their child's learning and get involved in the life and work of the early learning and childcare setting or school

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	38. The Scottish Government will ensure that the refreshed national training and development offer includes specific materials developed for and with parents and Parent Councils. The theme of <i>parental leadership</i> , confidence and capacity will be a strong element in this new package of support and advice.
15. Education Scotland should involve the National Parent Forum of Scotland and national parent organisations in the ongoing review and monitoring of how the main self-evaluation frameworks are working in practice (the 'How Good is Our...' series).	44. Education Scotland will continue to ensure that parental involvement and engagement are considered in the development of new and revised inspection frameworks. National parent organisations will also be fully involved in the on- going review of Education Scotland's self-evaluation frameworks up to 2021.
16. Education Scotland should review its resources and information for parents across all sectors. New resources for parents and practitioners should be developed where required.	9. Education Scotland will continue to work with stakeholders to review and refresh the content of Parentzone Scotland. The aim will be to help parents support their child's learning and get involved in the life and work of the early learning and childcare setting or school
17. The Scottish Government should provide dedicated funding to support parental engagement in its Digital Learning strategy, including infrastructure and continuing professional development for staff.	9. Education Scotland will continue to work with stakeholders to review and refresh the content of Parentzone Scotland. The aim will be to help parents support their child's learning and get involved in the life and work of the early learning and childcare setting or school 14. The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will work with parent organisations between August 2018 and March

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	<p>2019 to explore how digital and information technology resources can be better exploited to support parents' involvement and engagement. A report on the available options and next steps will be provided by June 2019.</p>
<p>18. The General Teaching Council of Scotland should work with initial teacher education providers and representatives from the National Parental Engagement Steering Group. It should also support the development and delivery of quality-assured continuing professional development training to ensure that practitioners are equipped and supported to work with parents and families and to develop best practice. Practitioners should have the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.</p>	<p>31. The joint work to improve national guidance on parental involvement and engagement will be supported by an additional investment in a package of training, awareness raising and advice materials. The contents of this package will be developed by end June 2019 and rolled out via Regional Improvement Collaboratives, local authorities and parent groups during the course of financial year 2019/2011. The package will be designed to support collaborative leadership at all levels and skills relating to trust and partnership.</p> <p>32. The General Teaching Council of Scotland will work with partners to ensure that parental involvement and engagement is fully reflected in amended standards for headship and professional standards for teachers and associated support materials. The new standards and accompanying supporting materials will be in place by August 2019.</p> <p>35. The Scottish Government will engage further with Initial Teacher Education (ITE) universities and early learning and childcare colleges in order to improve how parental involvement and engagement are reflected in relevant qualifications and courses, and to share expertise.</p>

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<p>19. The Scottish College of Educational Leadership should work with parenting organisations leading the ‘Into Headship’ qualification to ensure the parental perspective and parental engagement priorities help to shape the qualification and facilitation of relevant courses.</p>	<p>36. The Scottish College of Educational Leadership (SCEL), as part of Education Scotland, will work with parent organisations to ensure that parental involvement and engagement are included in the “Into Headship” qualification and the enhanced leadership support package for practitioners by March 2020.</p> <p>37. By March 2019 SCEL, as part of Education Scotland, will pursue the opportunity to build on the ‘People and Partners’ theme within Excellence in Headship. This theme looks at the importance of collaborative partnership working – a crucial aspect in ensuring effective parental involvement and engagement.</p>
<p>20. Scottish Government should fund new research on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective parental involvement and engagement strategies and approaches with a focus on key ages and stages of children’s learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-traditional family structures, with a focus on non-resident parents • Engagement with marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act (2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning at home, including homework • Further work as a result of the Family Learning Review • Parental engagement in secondary schools. 	<p>14. The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will work with parent organisations between August 2018 and March 2019 to explore how digital and information technology resources can be better exploited to support parents’ involvement and engagement. A report on the available options and next steps will be provided by June 2019.</p> <p>47. The Scottish Government will work with local authorities to pilot a new national survey of parents and carers by summer 2019, with a view to wider roll out in academic year 2019/20.</p> <p>48. The Scottish Government will ensure that the Growing up in Scotland (GUS) study provides reliable, relevant and impactful data relating to the links between parental involvement and engagement and children’s learning outcomes, publishing the next GUS report by the end of 2018.</p> <p>49. The Scottish Government will ensure that activity under Scotland’s Research Strategy for Education reflects parental</p>

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	<p>involvement and engagement, family learning and learning at home. The Scottish Government will work with the National Parent Forum of Scotland to review the extent to which research activity under the current strategy incorporates parental involvement and engagement. An initial analysis will be developed by end December 2018. The Scottish Government will consider the further steps that may be needed in order to provide a single “one stop shop” summarising the available evidence.</p> <p>50. The Scottish Government will ensure that key national policies relating to parental involvement and engagement take full account of the latest research and evidence. As part of this commitment, the Scottish Government will seek appropriate expert input and advice from independent academics throughout the timescale for this plan.</p>
<p>27. The Education (Scotland) Act (2016) requires local authorities each year to prepare and publish details of activities undertaken regarding their parental involvement strategy. They should comply in full with this requirement while also ensuring that parental engagement is included in the broader National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan reports. These reports should be jargon-free and written in plain English.</p>	<p>41. Local authority Parental Involvement Strategies will be reframed as strategies for involvement and engagement, with a requirement to review strategies every three years.</p>

Learning Together Actions which go beyond the scope of the Review:

4. The Scottish Government will continue to support the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) up to 2021. As part of this commitment, the Scottish Government will work with the NPFS to:
- identify new ways to provide a representative voice for parents, reflecting the diversity of the parent community;

- ensure that forum’s representatives are involved in all relevant forums;
- promote the forum at every level of the system.

11. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) will use its ‘Digital First’ approach to build an understanding of parent needs, learn from parent feedback and provide a ‘toolkit’ of plain English publications including social media content, which parents will be able to access during session 2018-19.

13. The Scottish Government will promote the National Parent Forum’s “Nutshell” series as providing a simple, straightforward source of information about education matters. The Scottish Government will explore with the National Parent Forum further opportunities to provide nutshell advice in alternative formats.

18. The Scottish Government will continue to deliver the Baby Box programme. This will include the launch of ‘Baby Box 2’ with national roll-out of a new design and contents by end March 2019.

22. The Scottish Government will ensure that effective support is provided to parents who would like to have access to Gaelic Medium Education for their children.

42. The Scottish Government will engage with Connect's Partnership Schools programme (funded by Skills Development Scotland) throughout the timescale for this plan, with a particular focus on reforming the culture and approach in relation to school improvement. The government will identify and share lessons and ensure that any national training, guidance or support materials take account of the initiative. This will help to support a more collaborative approach to improvement planning.