

Date 19 September 2007

Your Ref

Our Ref SP/FMG/DM

Dear Parent Council / Working Group

Draft Parental Involvement Strategy

Welcome to the first draft of our Parental Involvement Strategy. In it we outline how we intend to create opportunities for more parents to be more involved in their children's learning. The strategy covers a range of priorities. Uniting work across all of these areas is our commitment to 'involve families, schools and communities in improving the lives of children and young people'.

The strategy begins with a short Executive Summary which sets out the steps we will take in each of our eight priority areas. The full text explains the background to the strategy and provides more detail on the priority areas.

We want to hear your views on the draft. We have included some questions at the end of the paper (pages 39 and 40) for you to answer. You can do so electronically or on paper or by phone. Feedback is welcomed from individuals and from groups. For all feedback, please contact:

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Please submit responses by Friday 16 November 2007. We will then use the feedback which this first draft generates to produce a final version of the strategy.

For us, engagement and involvement are at the heart of this strategy. We hope that you can be part of this. Please read the Executive Summary or the full text as appropriate, let us know what you think and thereby help improve the quality of parental involvement in Edinburgh.

Yours sincerely

Frank McGrail
Head of Strategic Planning

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Edinburgh's Parental Involvement Strategy

Draft for consultation

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Edinburgh's Parental Involvement Strategy

Executive Summary

Welcome to this draft of Edinburgh's strategy for parental involvement.

The strategy is based on a vision for parental involvement which is broad and aspirational. We want to involve families, schools and communities in improving the lives of children and young people. To support this, we want to create opportunities for every parent to be more involved in their children's learning through supporting learning at home, participating in home/school partnerships and in Parent Forums and Councils

We recognise that parents are already involved in many ways. They support attendance, help with homework, volunteer, support uniform policy, respond positively to requests for information, e.g. on ethnic identity, and get involved in parents' groups.

The aim of this strategy is to build on previous good practice and create new opportunities for parents, schools, young people, communities and the Council to work together. We hope these new opportunities will support learning and lead to real improvements for all concerned.

The strategy is organised around eight priority areas. For each area, we have identified a number of steps we propose to take to turn this vision into reality.

Priority Areas

Detailed proposals have been developed in the following areas:

Developing Parent Forums and Parent Councils

To support Parent Forums to establish and develop Parent Councils, we will:

- provide help and advice to support the development of Parent Councils
- develop web-based support on <http://egfl.net> to help Parent Forums and Parent Councils share information
- organise and deliver training opportunities for Parent Forums and Parent Councils
- provide for Parent Councils' meeting expenses

Promoting parental involvement in learning – school-based

To promote parental involvement in their children's learning, we will:

- ensure that schools' annual improvement plans include proposals to improve parents' involvement in their children's learning
- consult parents on annual improvement plans
- evaluate how effectively we have involved parents in children's learning

Promoting parental involvement in learning – non school-based

To help parents to support the development of confident children, we will:

- encourage all key agencies to adopt the nationally recognised Solihull approach to working with parents and carers
- provide programmes for parent support across the city

- develop parent support services coherently across citywide and neighbourhood service development

Promoting engagement and involvement

To create opportunities for every parent to be more involved in their children's learning and education, we will:

- produce a toolkit of examples of how potential barriers to involvement have been addressed in Edinburgh (e.g. efforts to involve working parents, single parents, fathers)
- develop policy to support the involvement of non-resident parents
- organise and deliver training opportunities for staff and parents to develop involvement
- carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment on parental involvement to identify impacts in terms of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and faith and address any concerns arising

Developing a complaints procedure

To develop a complaints procedure on parental involvement, we will

- consult on a draft complaints procedure which fits with the Department's policy and the requirements of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

Improving the information schools provide to parents

To develop our communications to improve the information schools provide to parents, we will:

- produce a series of support guides for schools to help them improve communications with parents
- identify and share best practice

Promoting parental involvement in the recruitment of senior school staff

To support the involvement of parents in the recruitment of headteachers and other senior school staff, we will:

- involve parents in the development of new policy and procedures for the recruitment of senior school staff
- ensure that there are opportunities for parents to be involved at each stage of the process – from job adverts to final selection

Working with looked after and accommodated children

To support children and young people looked after by the authority, we will:

- consult on a new parental involvement policy for carers of looked after children
- help staff and carers understand their roles and responsibilities regarding parental involvement and looked after children

The details of each these proposals can be found in the main strategy document on pages 15 – 23.

What do you think?

We want to hear your views on this first draft of the strategy – whether you'd like to give us a general reaction or make a specific point. We welcome individual or collective feedback, on behalf of yourself or your group. And we're keen to discuss it with you - if you would like us to run a group discussion on the strategy or an aspect of it, please let us know.

This draft will be circulated widely to parents' groups, young people's groups, staff involved in parental involvement and the wider community and we hope the final strategy will be improved by your comments, ideas and suggestions.

If you have feedback, please fill out the form on the last two pages of this document (Appendix 4, pages 39 and 40) and return either electronically or by hard copy to:

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Edinburgh's Parental Involvement Strategy – full text

Vision, principles and aims

Our vision is of parental involvement which:

'involves families, schools and communities in improving the lives of children and young people.'

At the heart of this vision is the idea of **engagement**. Engagement of all concerned – parents and carers, children and young people, schools and communities. We believe that **engagement leads to real improvements in the lives of children and young people**. In addition, enhancing parental involvement will bring benefits for parents themselves, for schools and communities, and for the Children and Families Department and City of Edinburgh Council. The vision also highlights **life beyond the school gate**. Young people's lives in school hours and outwith school in the family and community are all of equal importance and meaningful parental involvement will have as much impact in communities as it will in families and schools.

This vision for parental involvement fits well with the Children and Families Department's own vision statement:

'All citizens of Edinburgh are entitled to social justice, respect, a secure and fulfilling childhood and opportunities for lifelong learning. Our vision is of a city where all children, young people and families can recognise and achieve their potential, benefit from a rewarding and challenging education, contribute positively to their communities and share in the high quality of life available in Edinburgh'.(1)

Parental involvement links closely with the Department's vision and aims. In addition, we have identified the following aims for the strategy:

- To facilitate the meaningful involvement of everyone including teachers, parents, children and young people, people involved in community learning and development, early years and childcare, and the voluntary sector
- To make a public statement of our commitment to involvement
- To move from words to actions
- To use what already exists where it is appropriate
- To celebrate and promote good practice
- To design and develop services to lead to wider involvement
- To achieve a better match between services and need
- To redesign and modify services based on evidence

The strategy is based on the following principles:

- Shared ownership and shared power
- Consultation and collaboration
- Inclusion, especially the need to include under-represented and/or groups often thought to be 'hard to reach'
- Thinking differently and exploring new approaches

- Applying community planning principles in action (this is more fully described on page 9)

Background

The Children and Families Department welcomes the national strategy for parental involvement which requires all local authorities to prepare a parental involvement strategy under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. Specifically, the Act places new duties on us to:

- Involve parents* in their own child's education, and that provided by a school to its pupils generally
- Give advice and information to parents in respect of their own child
- Promote the establishment of Parent Councils in schools and support their operation
- Establish a complaints procedure for duties under the Act.

The Act replaces School Boards with Parent Councils and focuses on three main areas:

Learning at home

The Act recognises that parents are the first and ongoing educators of their own children. As such, they need to receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home, in the community and at school.

Home/school partnership

The Act recognises that schools must be open to the involvement of parents in the work they do and schools should consider ways of developing relationships which help parents engage with the school and their children's learning.

Parental representation

The Act ensures that parents have the opportunity to have a say on policy matters affecting the education of their children. All parents are automatically members of the Parent Forum at their school and, through the Parent Council, they have the opportunity to work in partnership with the school, the Children and Families Department and others.

Links with other policy areas

The Act connects with a range of other policy areas including:

- **A Curriculum for Excellence**

A Curriculum for Excellence (ACfE) focuses on enabling young people to develop in the four capacities of education: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. It encourages more learning through experience and aims to provide more freedom for teachers, greater choice and opportunity for pupils and a single framework for the curriculum and assessment for ages 3 to 18. Schools and parents need to work together to encourage young people to develop in each of the capacities.

(* The definition of parent includes guardians or any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities in relation to or has care of a child)

- **Community Planning and Community Engagement**

Parental involvement is closely linked with community planning and community engagement, in that it involves the development of partnerships among professionals, agencies and ‘consumers’ of services, in this case, parents (and, of course, children and young people). In this respect, the National Standards for Community Engagement will help in the development of Parent Councils and Parent Forums, and their links with pupil/student councils. Productive links may also be made between Parent Councils and the new community planning structures which are emerging, e.g. local Neighbourhood Partnerships and Local Co-ordinating Groups

- **Looked After and Accommodated Children**

Looked after children are a particularly vulnerable group who have historically faced a lack of opportunity and lower than average educational attainment. We need to achieve the same benefits for these young people through development of parental involvement as we do for others. This requires a particular focus and priority to be given to the needs of these children and young people with their circumstances being carefully taken into account. Schools, carers (who may include the child’s parents), and other professionals all have an important part to play. Therefore our system should include: Ensuring that the advocacy for the child is of a high standard and that those with parental responsibility are given appropriate status; minimising moves for young people and achieving as much consistency as possible; ensuring that the school as an institution understands and responds positively to the needs and circumstances of each looked after child.

- **‘Getting it Right for Every Child’**

Through developing the Getting it Right proposals, the Scottish Executive has sought to encourage the development of children’s services that work well with one another and can support children and young people with complex needs. Edinburgh has responded enthusiastically to this central government initiative and is working to develop a local approach. The most important perspectives here are those of the child and the family, who should find that they are helped and not confused by the way in which services work together. The work on parental involvement in schools needs to fit closely with this wider work.

- **Additional Support for Learning**

Involving parents is an integral part of the 2004 Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act which introduces 12 new rights for parents and young people. Chapter 6 of Supporting Children’s Learning, the code of practice, is entitled ‘Working with Children and Families’ and contains advice on “how children, young people and families can be involved in education and learning” (2).

In Edinburgh, the Children and Families Department commissioned SNIP, a parent-led voluntary organisation for children with additional support needs, to operate an ASL helpline to support parents in understanding the Act, to support parents’ involvement and to ensure they are aware of their rights. In addition, Information for the General Public and a series of leaflets for parents and young people have been published, the latter being distributed to all education establishments.

A range of CPD opportunities is in place, not only for parents themselves but also for staff. These latter include general information on the Act and involving parents, as well as specific courses on ‘Communicating with Parents’.

Edinburgh’s approach

As an integrated department, Children and Families provides a wide range of services including schools, nurseries, Child and Family Centres, social work services, foster care, residential care, and community learning and development. Many of these services are relevant to parental involvement and from the beginning, the Department has been keen to develop a broad-based and consistent approach that covers all aspects of parental involvement and support to parents. We want to make sure the same principles and values underpin our support for Parent Councils and Parent Forums, our family learning work, our support for young people’s involvement in decision-making in student councils and Edinburgh Youth Council and our work in providing parenting support.

Previously separate areas of work, such as support for school boards on the one hand and the development of the parenting skills support agenda on the other, have now been brought together in one strategy with the emphasis on the vision and principles set out above.

In this respect, the scope of the strategy and the range of the challenges involved are very wide.

The Children and Families annual Service Improvement Plan sets out our key objectives. Parental involvement is firmly embedded in the Department’s planning cycle and it is included in the current plan.(3)

Parental Involvement Working Group

The strategy has been developed by a working group with representatives from throughout the Department, including schools, and parents. The group is chaired by the Head of Strategic Planning in Children and Families and has overall responsibility to develop and co-ordinate the strategy. It includes primary and secondary head teachers, community learning and development staff, school service management, neighbourhood services, early years, social work, quality improvement and community engagement. Parents are also represented. The involvement of parents from the outset is seen as crucial to provide a range of perspectives and expertise which would otherwise be absent.

Workstreams

Detailed proposals have been developed under the following workstreams:

- Developing Parent Forums and Parent Councils
- Promoting parental involvement in learning
 - school-based
 - non school-based
- Developing a complaints procedure
- Looked after and accommodated children/vulnerable children
- Information schools provide to parents
- Engagement and involvement
- Parental involvement in the recruitment of senior staff

These proposals can be found on pages 15-23 of this paper.

The development of the proposals has involved a range of stakeholders, including parents, in developing the specific objectives which are included in this strategy. Each workstream has reported to the Parental Involvement Working Group.

Reference Group

In addition to the working group and the workstreams, a wider reference group of contacts has been developed. This group includes:

The voluntary sector, community learning and development staff - including family learning staff, parents' groups, early years staff, social work staff, all schools and nursery schools, councillors, community councils, young people's organisations including student councils and Edinburgh Youth Council, and a wide range of community groups.

Information about the development of the strategy has been circulated to the Reference Group, along with details of the workstreams and how to get involved. This process has already encouraged some involvement and it is planned to consult extensively with this group on the first draft of the strategy.

Parental involvement in Edinburgh

There is a long history of parental involvement work in Edinburgh, in terms of parental representation, e.g. through School Boards, or supporting children's learning e.g. through Family Learning. Details of this are attached as appendix 1. Much of the excellent practice outlined in the appendix will be used as a solid foundation for our work in improving parental involvement (e.g. developing the Consultative Committee with Parents to reflect our new approaches).

Removing barriers to parental involvement

As the Scottish Executive's toolkit, 'Parents as Partners', points out, 'every parent wants the best for their child but (they) may have difficulty in participating in some activities.'⁽⁴⁾ The toolkit notes a number of barriers under the headings of time, family circumstances, geography, lack of confidence and unfamiliarity with parents' groups. According to the Scottish Consumer Council study, 'Making the Difference'⁽⁵⁾, the main reasons parents gave for not getting more involved are lack of time and lack of opportunities presented to them, followed by practical difficulties such as lack of childcare. There was also the perception on the part of some parents that parent bodies were for other people and not for 'normal parents'.

In addition to these barriers, there have been institutional barriers – schools themselves have not always been perceived as the most welcoming places for parents and, even when efforts are made to engage more effectively, involving parents can often seem very challenging for schools, and for parents' groups. Some parents want to get more involved – 45% would like to be more involved in the life of the school, according to 'Making the Difference' - but do not know how to do so.

According to a Warwick University study⁽⁶⁾, the main barriers to parental engagement cited by parents, school students and teachers are in order of significance: parents' own experience of education, parental lack of skills (confidence in

approaching schools, understanding of the school system, language), practical issues (such as time, childcare arrangements) and perceived teacher attitude.

Barriers affect different groups of parents in different ways, and factors such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, disability, and previous educational experience can all have a significant influence.

In terms of ethnicity these can be overcome by ensuring communication about all services is accessible and appropriate. Educational and care philosophies need to be communicated to those new to Scottish culture and there has to be an agreed understanding of the nature of racist bullying and a 'no tolerance' approach to it.

In terms of disability, information about parental involvement should be provided in a range of formats. Meetings should be held in accessible venues, which may not always be the school itself, and aids or interpreters should be made available. Parents of children who are disabled may find it difficult to take part in meetings, especially in the evenings when childcare may be an issue. They may need to be involved by other means such as newsletters, email or on-line forums.

In terms of gender, there are particular issues around the involvement of single mothers and of fathers. Obstacles to greater involvement of fathers include norms and assumptions about gender roles, essentially that parental involvement is more a matter for women than for men. These assumptions may be shared by professionals who assume that their engagement should be with the mother. Yet the contribution of fathers to their children's development - and therefore of engaging with fathers - is hugely significant. This is the case whether fathers live with their children or not. This strategy recognises the importance of engaging with fathers across all areas in which we aspire to involve parents - in early years services, in schools, in their children's learning, in child protection.

In terms of non-resident parents, our view is that, unless there is a pressing reason to the contrary, for example, in terms of child protection, non-resident parents have the same rights to information about their children and responsibilities to be involved in their learning and education as resident parents.

As part of the consultation process on the strategy, an **Equalities Impact Assessment** will be undertaken. The assessment will help to identify areas of specific positive or negative impact in terms of race, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender and faith. Any negative impacts will be addressed immediately. The assessment will help to inform the consultation process around the strategy.

In Edinburgh, we plan to highlight local examples of how these barriers can be addressed and overcome, and produce our own additions to the toolkit. We have carried out extensive research with staff and parents to find out how they have gone about making parental involvement more effective. We have come across good examples from a range of schools, from English as an Additional Language provision, family learning and community learning and development, and others. Some family learning groups have let us film their work with their children and schools, and have talked to us about how they became involved initially and how this involvement has been sustained. Using funding from Learning and Teaching Scotland's 'Parent

Partnership Fund', we intend to produce high quality materials are produced and are available to support good practice and stimulate new thinking.

There is a wealth of experience of successful approaches to support parental involvement within the Department. Sharing knowledge and contacts, working together across professional boundaries, and taking ideas from one context and trying them out in another will help us ensure that more parents are more involved.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation develops the Council's capacity to drive, secure and demonstrate measurable improvement from processes implemented by the parental involvement strategy.

Evidence of the processes and their impact can be gathered from 4 main sources:

- Relevant documentation
- Stakeholder's views and feedback
- Direct observation of practice
- Performance data

The evidence gathered enables evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategy against high level questions:

- What key outcomes have been achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of the processes of the strategy?
- How good is our management of the strategy?
- What is our capacity for improvement of the strategy?

As part of the Department's Service Improvement Plan, the strategy will be monitored on a six monthly basis and reported to the Department's Senior Management Team on an annual basis. In addition, the strategy will be evaluated in more detail by the Parental Involvement Working Group.

Parental involvement is also part on the schools inspection process and the extent to which parents are involved in pupils' education will now be included in the definition of 'quality of education' in school improvement plans.

References

1. City of Edinburgh Council Children and Families Department '*Service Improvement Plan 2007 – 2010*' 2007
2. Scottish Executive '*Supporting Children's Learning: Code Of Practice*' 2005
3. As 1 above
4. Scottish Executive '*Parents as partners in their children's learning*' toolkit 2006
5. Scottish Consumer Council/MORI Scotland '*Making the difference: Research on parents' views of Scottish Executive proposals to improve parental involvement and representation in schools*' 2005
6. A. Harris and J. Goodall, University of Warwick '*Engaging parents in raising achievement: Do parents know they matter?*' 2007

Priority area: Developing Parent Forums and Parent Councils

This aspect of the strategy is to provide assistance to Parent Forums to enable Parent Councils to be established and maintained, ensuring support is in place to allow growth and development.

Objectives (What we will do?)	Success criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead responsibility (Who will it do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure help and advice are available to Parent Forum working groups and Parent Councils to assist with their establishment. Continue to liaise with schools across all sectors to offer additional support. • Continue to develop the web pages on http://egfl.net to provide a forum for Parent Forums and Parent Councils to share information. • Secure funding for clerk and communication expenses. • Ensure insurance policies are in place for each Parent Forum working group until the Parent Council is formed. • Organise training courses and Neighbourhood information evenings for parents. • Arrange distribution of final copies of constitutions to Neighbourhoods. • Establish new format of CCwP including membership and remit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Councils will be established with final constitutions and elected members. • On-line feedback and suggestions from users. • Parent Councils will be able to claim clerk expenses and have a bank account set up. • Advise insurance broker once final constitution in place to allow policy documentation to be issued. • Evaluation sheets and feedback from Pilot meetings. • Use of new database to track issue. • Feedback from Parent Councils, Parent Forums and the Scottish Executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolved Resources and Support Manager/ Administrative Officer – Support Services • As above • As above (with support from Finance) • As above • As above with support from CPD Team/ Neighbourhood Representatives • As above • As above

Priority area: Promoting parental involvement in learning – school-based

This aspect of the strategy describes how the education authority will fulfil its duty to promote the involvement of parents in the education provided by the school to their child and to pupils generally at their child’s school.

Objectives (What we will do?)	Success criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead responsibility (Who will it do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that annual improvement plans in all schools and centres include priorities which will further involve a pupil’s parents in the education provided to the pupil and to the school’s pupils generally. • Ensure that the priorities which feature in the improvement plan result from the schools’/centres’ consultation with parents, staff, pupils and other members of the school’s community as appropriate. • Ensure that schools / centres develop strategies which gather evidence of improvement in parental involvement • Ensure that progress of the priorities is reviewed as part of the schools’/centres’ self evaluation programme and is evaluated in the school’s/centre’s annual Standards and Quality Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools/centres have a clear policy in place which recognises that parents and staff are partners in school based learning and which welcomes and encourages the involvement of parents in the work of the school. The implementation of the school/centre policy will support parents with their own child’s education and learning. • Strategies which implement the school’s / centre’s policy on parental involvement improve the quality of learning experiences, achievement and attainment for children/young people. • Schools /centres can provide a range of evidence which they use to evaluate the improvement in parental involvement. • The school’s / centre’s policy and strategies is evaluated annually and revised as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Improvement Officers, School Services Managers.

Priority area: Promoting parental involvement in learning – non school-based

This aspect of the strategy describes how we will build capacity and wellbeing in parents and carers and support the growth of children’s confidence through establishing coherent city wide and neighbourhood services for involving, engaging and supporting parents and carers on an ongoing basis.

Objectives (What we will do?)	Success criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead responsibility (Who will it do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support all key agencies to adopt the Solihull* approach in working with parents/carers • Develop a framework of programmes for parent support for adoption by key agencies across the city (in the context of the Solihull approach). • Agree an implementation plan for the Framework which encourages and facilitates consistent delivery of programmes • Identify successful approaches from the current range of universal and targeted opportunities for parents to access support and build wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant staff are trained in the Solihull approach The Solihull approach is used by all key groups of staff in their work with parents/carers • The Framework is developed and adopted Ongoing staff training and support arrangements are identified and in place • Delivery plan is agreed with identified timescales for training key staff Evaluation criteria are agreed and implemented consistently • Opportunities identified and evaluated according to agreed success criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (through the Early Years and Childcare Sub Group) • Parental Involvement Working Group Sub Group (Promoting parental involvement in learning – non school-based) and CYPSP. • Parental Involvement Working Group Sub Group • Parental Involvement Working Group Sub Group

* The Solihull Approach provides a set of underpinning principles and a way of working with all parents and children which allows for positive and open relationships built on mutual trust and allows parents to discuss parenting issues in non self-critical ways

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build parental capacity and wellbeing through coherent city wide and neighbourhood service development • Organise two seminars (one for staff and one for parents/carers) on the links between support to parents, building well being, the Curriculum for Excellence and children's learning • Agree mechanisms for rolling out identified promising approaches for parent engagement and involvement in schools and other establishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of underpinning principles agreed Programmes to build parental wellbeing in place across neighbourhoods Parent/carers report increased wellbeing particularly in areas of high deprivation. • Seminars held and outcomes disseminated • Staff training opportunities identified and resourced Ongoing staff support arrangements agreed and in place. Positive engagement of parents in children's learning increases. Achievement and attainment levels for children and young people improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Involvement Working Group Sub Group • Parental Involvement Working Group Sub Group/Schools and Early Years and Childcare Service Managers/QIOs/Parent and carer reps • Parental Involvement Working Group Sub Group.
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Priority area: Promoting engagement and involvement

This aspect of the strategy concerns the efforts which the Department will make to ensure that there are opportunities for every parent to be more involved in their children’s learning and education

Objectives (What we will do?)	Success criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead responsibility (Who will it do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce, maintain and disseminate widely a toolkit of local examples of good practice in involving parents and overcoming barriers (to complement the Scottish Executive’s ‘Parents as Partners’ toolkit) • To develop policy to support the involvement of non-resident parents in their children’s learning and education • To develop a range of training and other CPD opportunities for staff and parents in relation to developing parental involvement • To carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment on the Parental Involvement Strategy and amend proposals in line with findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit is produced in appropriate formats, including electronic, and used widely by Parent Councils and Forums, schools and a range of staff involved in supporting parental involvement. Evaluation generates positive feedback and users suggest new content • Non resident parents have the same opportunities to be involved as resident parents do • The skills, confidence, abilities and knowledge of staff with a responsibility for parental involvement are enhanced • Potential negative impacts are identified early and appropriate steps are taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Officer – Engagement and Involvement along with colleagues in Community Learning and Development • School Services Manager (East) • Community Learning and Development • Principal Officer – Engagement and Involvement and Principal Officer - Equalities

Priority area: Developing a complaints procedure

This aspect of the strategy describes how the Children and Families Department will develop its complaints procedure to address complaints raised in relation to its responsibilities under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. Drafts of both the Joint Complaints Policy and the Children and Families Services (except Social Work) Complaints Procedure are included as appendices 2 and 3 to this strategy (pages 26 - 38)

Objectives (What we will do?)	Success criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead responsibility (Who will it do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a draft Complaints Procedure that fits with the principles of the Department’s Complaints Policy and the requirements of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 • Consult on the draft to: Seek feedback from parents on its fitness for purpose as an effective means of resolving complaints Seek the views of parents on how the procedure should be made known and available • Publish final complaint procedure with P I Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Procedure will be included in the Draft Parental Involvement Strategy • Feedback received, collated and where appropriate, changes made to draft procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and Conciliation Manager/ Service Development Manager • Parents Forums/Councils/ CCwP/ Head Teachers/Business Managers

Priority area: Improving the information schools provide to parents

This aspect of the strategy describes how the Children and Families Department will develop its communications to improve the information schools provide parents

Objectives (What we will do?)	Success criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead responsibility (Who will it do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing design templates for schools and identify what additional templates would be useful • Identify existing best practice in schools that can be shared with others • A series of support guides will be produced for schools to help them improve their own communications • A review of existing departmental materials for parents/service users will be carried out to identify gaps and prioritise the production of new information leaflets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Templates are created that are used by schools to improve the quality of their own information • A site will be developed in EGFL to enable good practice to be shared. Best practice will be identified that can be included on this site • A guide to gaining positive publicity and a guide to ‘marketing your school’ will be produced • This work is being piloted with social work services and will then be rolled out to other areas of the Children and Families Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Communications/Principal Officer – Engagement and Involvement, and Community Learning and Development • Communications • Communications/departmental working group

Priority area: Promoting parental involvement in the recruitment of senior school staff

This aspect of the strategy describes how the Children & Families Department will involve parents in the recruitment of senior school staff. This strategy adheres to the principles as defined in the following documentation: Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, Regulation 132 and guidance documentation from the Scottish Executive Education Department

Objectives (What will we do?)	Success Criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead Responsibility (Who will do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a short life working group which will take responsibility for developing a revised policy and procedures for the recruitment of senior school staff • Ensure that the Children & Families Department develops a policy and procedures which adhere to statutory policy and national guidance, (including new equal opportunities legislation) and appropriately involves parents. • Ensure that the policy and procedures provide an opportunity for increased parental involvement at the following stages of the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job specification and adverts -Long listing -Short listing (final selection) • Ensure that appropriate stakeholders have been consulted on the new policy and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The short life working group will have been successfully established and the membership of the group will reflect a wide range of stakeholders, including parents. • The policy and procedures will provide a mechanism to ensure that parents take a key role in the appointment of senior staff, leading to successful appointments. • The new policy will reflect current thinking on improved recruitment procedures of senior school staff. • The policy will give clear guidance to parents and staff regarding the procedures involved in the recruitment process. • Parents will have been engaged appropriately in the development of the policy. • Feedback from the consultation process has been considered and taken into account in the formation of the policy and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Neighbourhood Manager to lead a short life working group

Priority area: Working with looked after children

This aspect of the strategy describes how the Children and Families Department will fulfil its responsibilities under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 for children who are looked after by the local authority.

Objectives (What we will do?)	Success criteria (How will we know that we have been successful?)	Lead responsibility (Who will it do it?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a draft policy statement about parental involvement with carers of looked after children. The statement will address policy principles, roles and responsibilities and entitlements, and give practical examples of measures that need to be taken. The draft will be consistent with the framework document “Looked After Children: We can and must do better” • Consult with foster carers, prospective adopters, staff in residential care and schools about the draft statement. • Produce the final statement, incorporating lessons learned from feedback. • Produce materials, such as leaflets, to help staff and carers understand their roles, responsibilities and entitlements. • Devise and incorporate monitoring process within the monitoring and evaluation of the overall strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft policy statement is circulated. • Feedback received, collated and where appropriate, revisions lead to final policy statement. • Monitoring framework in place • Demonstration of practical progress on a range of issues – for example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrated involvement of carers ○ Positive experience reported by carers ○ Demonstrated involvement of parents of Looked after children and positive experience reported ○ Educational attainment and achievement by looked after children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager, Services for Children, Young People and Families. <p>Involving foster / adoptive carers, parent councils, staff in residential care, family based care and schools.</p>

Appendix 1

Parental involvement in Edinburgh

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) have existed in Edinburgh schools for decades. PTAs enable parents to become more involved in the life of the school in a range of ways, such as fundraising, social gatherings, informal contact between parents and teachers, and educational issues and activities.

School boards were established in 1989 and their main purpose was to promote contact between the school, parents of pupils in attendance at the school and the community. Parents, school staff and co-opted members met to share ideas, discuss issues and look at new opportunities. Through the school board, parents could be much more involved in the way schools were run.

Some of the areas which boards were involved in included:

- Taking part in the appointment of senior promoted teaching staff and other staff appointments
- Approving the Head Teacher's proposals for buying books and materials
- Nominating members to serve on Area Attendance Advisory Groups
- Encouraging the formation of a PTA where none existed
- The Head Teacher consulted the board on the School Development Plan, hours of opening, school dress, homework, discipline policy and curricular provision
- Communicating with parents

Consultative Committee with Parents

In line with the Council's commitment to forging close partnerships with parents, a Consultative Committee with Parents was formed in 1996 as a Sub-Committee of the Council. It was expected that discussion would focus on major education issues and other items raised by parent representatives that were of a wider authority interest.

Items discussed, reports and presentations have covered a wide range of topics including Early Years, Revenue Budget (annually), reduction in class sizes, draft Service Improvement Plan, school meals, session dates and transport. Among items discussed this session were the ICT Improvement Programme, Accessibility Strategy, Communities that Care, P1 Intake Communications Strategy, A Curriculum for Excellence, Implementation of Additional Support for Learning Act, Sports Academy, and the new Parental Involvement legislation.

There are parent representatives for each of the five Children and Families' neighbourhoods - two secondary school board representatives, a representative from each of the primary clusters, special and nursery school representatives. In addition, there are Head Teacher representatives, special school organisation representatives, an observer from the Scottish Parent Teacher Council and opposition spokespersons. The Convener and Director of Children and Families and a range of Children and Families representatives also attend. Turnout at meetings varies between 30 and 40. Over the years there has been very positive feedback on the CCwP and recent feedback indicates that it should continue.

Community Learning and Development staff have extensive experience of developing community engagement and involvement in a range of settings including schools. Family Learning staff as part of the Community-based Adult Learning teams work in identified schools throughout the city. Parents and carers are supported in their role as educators of their children and encouraged to create/support a culture of lifelong learning in families.

This work encourages the personal development of the individual and through ongoing support enables the learner to become involved in the learning and development of their child on an individual and wider school basis.

Community Capacity Building staff also work with parents in a variety of situations to enable people as individuals and in groups to develop the skills and knowledge that allow them to participate in the running and operation of groups, organisations and campaigns. Examples of this are the formation of community based parents groups, specialist activity groups and informal learning.

Appendix 2 – Draft Joint Complaints Policy

Purpose

The Health & Social Care Department and the Children and Families Department provide a range of services for the public. We are committed to ensuring fair access to effective quality services and recognise the importance of children, young people and their families being satisfied with the services they receive. When anyone who uses our services is not satisfied, they or their representative are encouraged to let us know by using the appropriate complaint procedure.

Scope

This policy is relevant to all Health & Social Care and Children and Families Department Services which have the following procedures for managing complaints.

- Social Work complaints
- Throughcare and Aftercare complaints (for formerly Looked After and Accommodated Children receiving support)
- Additional Support for Learning (mediation for disputes arising under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2005)
- Children and Families Services including Social Work.

Definitions

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by Children and Families staff affecting an individual child, family member or group.

A concern may arise if an individual thinks that either the Health & Social Care Department or the Children and Families Department has:

- Done something wrong;
- Failed to do something that it should have done;
- Acted unfairly or impolitely.

A complaint can be a means of seeking clarification, gaining a second or new opinion, making comments, expressing concern, querying a decision or questioning a policy.

There may be circumstances when complaints or appeals do not fall within the scope of the complaints procedures. For example, the exclusions of pupils from school or where legal proceedings are underway.

Policy Statement

The Health & Social Care and the Children and Families Departments aim to develop a listening and learning culture, where we tell people who use our services what we have learned from their complaints and the information is used to drive service improvement. The listening and learning culture underpins our wish to work in partnership with people who use our services. We want people to have opportunities to tell the Departments about both good and bad experiences.

Our complaints procedures will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- Be easily accessible and publicised;
- Be simple to understand and use;
- Be impartial;
- Be non-adversarial;
- Allow swift handling within established time limits for action and key people informed of progress;
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by a person independent of the service where necessary;
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress where necessary;
- Provide information to the Department's Senior Management Team, so that services can be improved.

Responsibilities

This policy will be monitored by the Complaints Services in both the Health & Social Care and the Children and Families Departments.

Legislative Context

- The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 S5B
- National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 S.52
- Social Work (Representatives Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1990
- The Support and Assistance of Children and Young People Leaving Care (Scotland) Regulations 2003
- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006
- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2005

Associated Documents

- The Health and Social Care Department's complaints leaflet.
- The Children and Families Department's complaints leaflets.

Appendix 3

Complaints procedure for Children and Families Services (except Social Work)

1. Purpose

This is the Children and Families Department complaints procedure for all services, except Social Work.

1.2 Background

The Children and Families Department provides a range of services for the public and stakeholders, such as

- The Council's Executive Education, Children and Families Committee
- Individual Elected Members
- Pupils and Parents
- Adults and young people in the community
- School/Community learning and Development Centres
- Communities
- Voluntary organisations
- External agencies

We are committed to ensuring fair access to effective quality services and recognise the importance of children, young people and their families being satisfied with the services that they receive. When anyone who uses our services is dissatisfied, they or their representative are encouraged to let staff know, by using the appropriate complaints procedure.

Complaints will be managed in a thorough and sensitive way with the aim of achieving resolution.

We are also committed to bringing about continuous improvement through analysis of outcomes of upheld or partially upheld complaints, which will be used to influence service development and improve Departmental planning and practice.

2. Scope

2.1 Service staff dealing with complaints in Children and Families (except Social Work)

2.1 This is the Children and Families Department complaints procedure for all the Department's services (except Social Work) such as schools, Early Years' establishments, Community Learning and Development and sections of the Department, such as free school meals, transport to schools or curriculum issues.

2.2 Examples of complaints to be considered

A complaint can be considered as a means of seeking clarification, gaining a second or new opinion, expressing concern, querying a decision or questioning a policy.

2.3 Examples of complaints not covered in this procedure

There are circumstances when complaints do not fall within the scope of this procedure, these include all Social work complaints, exclusions from school and pupil placements (which have separate appeal mechanisms), where matters which are being dealt with under the staff grievance and disciplinary procedures, or where legal proceedings are already underway.

2.4 Making a complaint

A complaint can be made by any member of the public who receives, or wishes to receive a service from the Children and Families Department.

2.5 Aims of this complaint procedure are to

- provide a clear and effective procedure for dealing with complaints about all aspects of the Children and Families Department;
- allow people who use our services a means of challenging decisions, and provide those refused a service with an opportunity to have their request reconsidered;
- manage complaints in an effective and sensitive manner, appropriate to the circumstances of the case, with the aim of achieving resolution;
- investigation of complaint will be undertaken by an appropriate Manager, in whose area of responsibility the matter lies;
- develop a listening and learning culture;
- raise staff awareness about partnership working/ customer focus being crucial to resolving issues and improving services;
- give members of the public opportunities to raise both their positive and/or negative experiences;

- advise members of the public wishing to make a complaint about schools, early years establishments, community learning and development centres and sections of the Department, how to go about it;
- respond to complainants within a reasonable time in a courteous and effective way;
- satisfy complainants that the education service takes their complaint seriously and will deal with it appropriately and promptly;
- learn from outcomes of complaints, where complaints are found to be upheld, or partially upheld
- undertake complaint analysis to influence service development and improve Departmental practice and planning;
- publicise what has been learned from complaints, and what action has been taken to adjust services from upheld or partially upheld complaints

3. Definitions

3.1 Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, and action or lack of action by Children and Families staff, affecting an individual child, family member or group.

3.2 Definition of Mediation

Mediation, to be used in complaints relating to ‘Additional Support for Learning’ issues as a statutory obligation and also, for non-statutory complaint resolution, is a process for handling disputes that assists the people involved to reach an agreed settlement between them, with an impartial mediator facilitating the process.

It is voluntary and confidential where both parties – complainants and senior staff-are expected to work in good faith with an impartial third party to decide the terms of any agreement.

Mediation is intended to look towards problem- solving options, rather than being adversarial, and this often results in creative options for agreed settlement between both parties.

3.3 Definition of Conciliation

Conciliation is a collaborative problem-solving, solution focused system between both parties with an impartial third party, who provides a step by step process to hear the issues arising, understands the options and thinks about solutions. The third party makes recommendations for action from complaints investigated, and meetings undertaken with the parties involved towards resolution of difficulties, at the earliest

opportunity. This ensures a speedy response and appropriate redress, and adjustments to services, when necessary.

4. Actions

4.1 Procedure for raising a complaint about the Children and Families Service (except Social Work).

The Children and Families' Education Advice and Conciliation Helpline provides early intervention assistance in conflict resolution, at any stage of the complaints procedure for:

- (i) Parents
- (ii) Community Learning and Development users
- (i) Senior Establishment staff
- (ii) Department staff
- (iii) Stakeholders and
- (iv) Elected members, when representing constituents as complainants.

The Advice Helpline is available for members of the public, staff and stakeholders during office hours and can be used for information on how to resolve a complaint or how to raise a formal complaint.

Helpline: Telephone Advice and Conciliation Service 0131 469 3233.

4.2 This complaints procedure ensures that staff

- welcome complaints;
- facilitate members of the public being able to raise complaints;
- address each complaint on a confidential basis with the staff involved;
- allow prompt handling of complaints at every level within established time limits for action and key people advised of progress;
- take action within agreed time limits;
- ensure an impartial and fair investigation, by an appropriate Manager in whose area of responsibility the complaint lies;
- advise complainants and members of staff involved of progress, or give reasons for lack of progress, when necessary;

- provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- record complaints, actions taken and outcomes to influence service development and improve Departmental planning and practice.
- learn from upheld complaints or partially upheld complaints at every level, so that services can be improved, where necessary.

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

4.3.1 In order to monitor this complaints procedure staff in establishments will keep confidential records of Stage 1 complaints for

- (i) performance management information, noting the possible trends and patterns;
- (ii) analysing complaint information, for instance, for Managers, review teams and HMIE.

4.3.2 It is expected that complaints information will be recorded at every level -

- (i) Establishment level : Stage1 complaints
- (ii) Neighbourhood level : Stage 2 complaints and
- (iii) Children and Families Department level: Stage 3 complaints.

4.3.3 The Advice and Conciliation Service (except Social Work) will receive and collate complaints information at Stage 2 and Stage 3 levels, on an annual basis from Investigating Officers on the following three elements

- (v) the complaint category
- (vi) action taken or proposed and
- (vii) outcomes- either upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.

- The Advice and Conciliation Service will seek feedback from a sample of complainants, staff and stakeholders on how well the Children and Families Department has met the aims of this procedure on an annual basis;
- The Advice and Conciliation Service will report annually at the end of the reporting year after 31 March each year, on complaints information from Stage 2 in Neighbourhoods, and Stage 3 in the Children and Families Department, to the Senior Management Team and the Council's Education, Children and Families Committee.

- This information will
 - (i) influence service development to improve services
 - (ii) contribute to the identification and provision of Continuing Professional Development needs for staff
 - (iii) increase levels of satisfaction with the Education, Children and Families Services.

4.2 . Stage 1: Local resolution

The Children and Families Department expects that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved at local level with staff of a particular service, e.g. by

- Head Teacher;
- Community Learning and Development Manager at the local Community Education Centre;
- the Early Years' Establishment's Manager;
- section staff in the Children and Families Department dealing with, for instance, free school meals, curriculum issues, transport to schools or curriculum issues.
- When a Stage 1 complaint is received by the Advice and Conciliation Service, Helpline staff will facilitate a local resolution, whenever possible. This will involve seeking permission from the complainant to contact the appropriate establishment Manager to resolve the issues being raised, as soon as possible.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there should be full discussion at local level in the first instance with the appropriate member of staff.
- Attempts to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity will be made by senior staff in establishments with the support of the Advice and Complaints Helpline. Responses will normally be made by establishment Heads or by Advice and Conciliation staff, if they have been involved. Responses will be made in the manner the complaint was received (e.g. telephone, e-mail, face to face meeting or in writing).
- The complaint will be dealt with in a confidential manner, and knowledge of it will be limited to those directly involved.
- Complaints Stage 1 will be dealt with as soon as possible, usually within 5 working days. If, for any reason, more time is needed, this will be explained to the member of the public.

- If possible, the issue will be resolved and the complaint, action and the outcome will be recorded in the establishment's complaints log.
- At Stage 1, every attempt will be made at local level, to deal appropriately with complaints raised, to provide answers and resolve problems at the earliest opportunity.

4.3. Stage 2 : Formal Complaint

- *If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant at local level or requires an investigation external to the service, then the Advice and Conciliation Manager will allocate the investigation of the complaint to the appropriate Manager, as Investigating Officer, in the Neighbourhood area where the complaint has been raised.*
- A written acknowledgement will be sent promptly if the complaint has been received in writing by Advice and Conciliation Service staff and copied to the Investigating Officer.
- After allocation of the complaint, the Investigating Officer will formally investigate the issues arising.
- The Investigating Officer will discuss the issues raised with the complainant, when necessary, to bring out more fully its nature and detail. The purpose of the discussion is to give a clear description of the complaint, which may help in its consideration. At any meeting in connection with the complaint, a supporter or interpreter will be welcome to support the complainant.
- The complaint will be dealt with in a confidential manner and knowledge of it will be limited to those directly involved.
- The complainant may telephone, e-mail, write or raise their complaint in person.
- In the written complaint, the home address and telephone number should be included, with a clear indication of what the complaint is, and what the complainant would like to be done.
- Anonymous complaints will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Following the investigation of the complaint, a full response will be sent to the Advice and Conciliation Manager, as soon as possible, normally within 10 working days, except in exceptional circumstances. It will explain the outcome, the reasons for it, any management action to be taken or proposed, and any further action the complainant may take.

- The Advice and Conciliation Manager before sending the response to the complainant, will review the Investigating officer's response, and liaise with him/her as necessary.
- The formal report will be logged on the confidential Advice and Conciliation Service database.
- Every attempt at this Stage 2 level will be made to deal appropriately with complaints raised, to provide answers and resolve problems, at the earliest opportunity.
- Conciliation is available with the Advice and Conciliation Manager at Stage 2 complaints level if the parties agree, this is a way forward for a positive resolution.
- Any management action to be taken from an upheld, or partially upheld complaint, will be undertaken and logged, by the appropriate member of senior staff. These will be forwarded to the Advice and Conciliation Manager, for annual reporting to Senior Management Team, and to the Council's Education, Children and Families Committee.

4.4 Stage 3: Formal Complaint : Director

If every attempt to settle the complaint by the Investigating Officer has been unsuccessful, the Director reviews the complaint and takes appropriate action.

Exceptions will be complaints at Stage 3 under the Education (Additional Support for Learning Scotland) Act 2004 for face to face mediation and resolution, which will be undertaken by the Advice and Conciliation Manager.

The Director will delegate to an appropriate Senior Manager so that

- arrangements can be made for the complainant to clarify the detail of the complaint and the expectations they may have;
- relevant staff will be interviewed to seek their perspective on the matter raised;
- an investigation report will be prepared and approved by the Director and will conclude with advice of the complainant's right to approach the Ombudsman at Stage 4.

4.5 Action to be taken if a complaint is upheld

If a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, the steps which the Children and Families Department will take are to:

- put right what went wrong in this instance, if that is possible;

- adjust service delivery to try to prevent a similar problem arising in the future;
- offer an apology where appropriate.
- collect and collate complaints information, as contributions from complainants and the action taken as a result of upheld and partially upheld complaints, so that this information can be disseminated to Heads of Establishments, to minimise the possibility of similar complaints being raised in other establishments.

Stage 4: The Ombudsman

The Children and Families Service expects that the complainant will feel satisfied and at least appreciate that the complaint has been fully and fairly considered.

- If, in exceptional circumstances, it is felt that the case has not been properly administered by the Children and Families Service, complainants have the right to submit a complaint to the Scottish Local Government Ombudsman. S/he would normally expect the complainant to have given the Children and Families Department, the opportunity to address the issue, in the first instance.
- The Ombudsman can only investigate complaints where injustice has been caused by a fault in the way the Children and Families Service has acted, or failed to act. S/he does not have the power to question what has been done on the grounds that someone does not agree with a decision.
- Matters subject to investigation have relatively strict limits and do not include any action concerning the giving of religious or secular instruction and matters concerning conduct, curriculum, internal organisation, management or discipline in any educational establishment under the management or an education authority.

Further information is available from:

Scottish Local Government Ombudsman
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh EH3 7NS

Tel: 0800 377 7330

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Investigating Officers (except Social Work) in the Children and Families Department are expected to be:

- available to listen to complaints in the first instance;

- make suitable arrangements to meet with complainants and stakeholders;
- ensure complaints are acknowledged quickly and courteously, listening to what is being said and responding appropriately;
- make every effort to resolve complaints as quickly as possible;
- keep a record of complaints, action taken, conclusions and outcomes;
- monitor complaints in order to make adjustments in service delivery when considered necessary;
- offer advice to members of staff on strategies for dealing with complaints positively;
- provide leadership to staff's further developing professional relationships with members of the public;
- seek support and assistance when required, from the Advice, Complaints and Conciliation (except Social Work) Manager, if a formal Stage 2 complaint is being investigated.

7.1 The Advice and Conciliation Manager is responsible for

- management and strategic development of the Children and Families' Advice and Conciliation Service (ACS) including the ACS Helpline;
- Additional Support for Learning statutory face-to-face mediation for parents, staff and stakeholders;
- Conciliation when necessary at Stage 2 level
- liaising, advising, consulting and coaching Managers in effective complaints handling
- coordination of complaints allocated to Investigating Officers;
- review the Investigating Officers report in terms of complaints, time taken, actions to be undertaken, conclusions drawn and outcomes from formal complaint received at Stage 2;
- collate complaint data to influence service development and improve Departmental planning and practice, and reporting on a regular basis to the Senior Management Team, quarterly to the Chief Executive's office and annually to the Education, Children and Families Committee.
- provide Continuing Professional Development to staff across Children and Families in

- (i) Conflict Resolution
- (ii) Mediation Skills,
- (iii) Handling Complaints Effectively
- (iv) Consultancy with senior staff from Councils across Scotland
- (v) Conferences and seminars

6. Policy Base

6.1 Legislative framework

The responsibilities of the Children and Families Department's Education Service are defined by law:-

- Education (Scotland) Act 1980;
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995;
- Standards in Scotland's Schools (Scotland) Act 2000;
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004;
- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

6.2 The responsibilities are also reflected in

- The Parents' Charter 1995;
- The Citizen's Charter 1991;
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

Appendix 4



If you have feedback, please fill in the following two pages and return them to the address below

Feedback

We would like to know your answers to the following questions:

- 1. Have we identified the right priority areas for the strategy?**
(Is there anything that is missing or unclear? Should any new priorities be added?)

- 2. Have we identified the right actions for each priority area?**
(Again, is anything missing or unclear? Do we need to add new actions or take some out?)

- 3. Do you have any specific comments on any of the priority areas?**

- **Priority area**
- **Comments**

- **Priority area**
- **Comments**

4. **Can you identify any potential negative impacts that this strategy might have in terms of race, disability, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion/ faith and older age?**

5. **What do you think are the major barriers to parental involvement which we need to overcome?**

6. **Do you have any other comments in relation to the strategy?**

For all feedback, please contact:

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