

**National Parent Forum of Scotland ([www.parentforumscotland.org](http://www.parentforumscotland.org)) – Update for Edinburgh Parent Councils, May 2011, by Tina Woolnough, Edinburgh rep**

Dear all

Further to my presentation at the City of Edinburgh Council's Consultative Committee with Parents meeting on 10 May, it was agreed that I should provide a monthly update of information from the National Parent Forum which might be of interest to parents/carers and parent councils. Please do give me feedback about the content. I am also including with this update a brief summary of the role of National Parent Forum and of its aspirations. I am seeking a depute rep for Edinburgh – please let me know if you are interested in finding out more.

- **Four New Curriculum for Excellence Factfiles** for parents are now available from *Learning and Teaching Scotland* at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/cfe/index.asp>. New topics are literacy across learning, numeracy across learning, outdoor learning and 3-18 transitions. The National Parent Forum was consulted on the content of these. The new Factfiles join existing ones on assessment and qualifications, background and benefits, health and wellbeing, parents as partners, supporting learners and the secondary experience. A Curriculum for Excellence jargon-buster is currently under construction. What other information would parents/carers in your school find helpful?
- **The Scottish Qualifications Authority** has now published more detailed information, in draft form for consultation, on the course content of the new National 4 and National 5 qualifications. This can be viewed on the SQA website at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46427.html>.
- **Changes to the Additional Support for Learning Act** mean some new obligations on schools and local authorities. Local authorities are required to provide the following information: where parents/carers can find help, information and advice, including contact details for Enquire ([www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk)), the national support organization for families with children who need additional support for learning. Information on dispute resolution and mediation services must be made available by all schools; this information also needs to be included in school handbooks and on school and local authority websites. See <http://enquire.org.uk/20100622/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/ASL-Act-2009-changes.pdf>.
- **Enquire**, the national support body for families with children who have additional support for learning needs, has published its latest newsletter at <http://enquire.org.uk/publications/newsletters>. It includes a short article about the National Parent Forum which has an Additional Support for Learning sub-group. This group is working on an information leaflet to raise awareness about additional support for learning and the role of parent councils.
- **The next meeting of the National Parent Forum of Scotland** takes place on Saturday 4 June. Please let me know if you would like any issues raised or seek information on education-related matters. Our annual conference is scheduled for October – please look out for further details.

***Background Information on the National Parent Forum of Scotland***

*In response to parental wishes for a national representation body for parents, The National Parent Forum of Scotland was formed in November 2009 to “work in partnership with national and local government and with other*

organisations involved in education and wellbeing issues to represent parents in pursuit of our aim to help every pupil maximise his/her potential”.

#### **Keys Facts:**

- *The Forum meets three times a year, rotating between Edinburgh and Glasgow for transport accessibility/cost reduction*
- *Has a Parent Forum area on the national Glow intranet*
- *Has reps from most local authorities and is working actively to recruit reps to ensure full representation*
- *Has sub-groups eg policy/strategy; Curriculum for Excellence; Additional Support for Learning;*
- *Has reps on national bodies and government working groups etc eg Curriculum for Excellence Management Board*
- *Supported by Learning and Teaching Scotland for admin*

#### **Key challenges (these may be the same challenges that school parent councils face!)**

- *Communications – how/whether to offer parental perspectives and/or representation?*
- *How to gather views?*
- *How to keep up with national policy-making, local policy delivery and school experience of policy delivery, plus children’s experience of this!*

#### **Progress so far**

- *Building relationships at all levels*
- *Providing feedback to Scottish Government on policy roll-out eg Curriculum for Excellence*
- *Checking that information is as parent-friendly as possible eg the latest Scottish Government CfE Factfiles for parents*
- *Sharing information to move progress along eg new requirements for schools/local authorities in the Additional Support for Learning Act*
- *Beginning to establish communication networks within local authority areas; helping local parent councils to work on communications*
- *Sharing information and good practice with other National Parent Forum reps eg for improving communications between parent councils and parents; for ensuring more voices are heard eg parents with children with additional support for learning needs*
- *Gaining perspective and a wider context regarding parental involvement*

#### **Next Steps**

- *To continue to improve communications between reps and parent councils/parents to ensure two-way flow*
- *To move towards input in policy-making at its early stages*
- *To continue to put parental views forward to Scottish Government*
- *To work to engage parent councils in strategy and policy-making issues and decision-making*