



## E-NEWS UPDATE WINTER 2016

[Visit National Parent Forum of Scotland website](#)

### WINTER NEWSLETTER 2016

The last few months have been a busy time for everyone involved in Scottish education, with Scottish Government announcing the National Improvement Framework, the publication of the findings of the OECD review, and many other developments. As ever, NPFS representatives have been very active on parents' behalf - some of the highlights being the delivery of a range of events and engagement opportunities, the launch of new publications and an exciting project announcement. Read on for more details. And of course, parents, pupils and school staff have been continuing to make Scottish education the success story it is internationally recognised as being. However, as the OECD flagged up in their report, we can't rest on our laurels, and there is still much to be done to ensure that all our children receive the best possible educational experience, and that parents continue to be engaged and informed.

We very much look forward to working with you all over the course of the year. Make sure you follow us on Twitter and Facebook and keep an eye on our website to stay up-to-date with all the latest developments.

In the meantime, if you would like to find out more about all the work NPFS undertakes, or learn about how you can get involved in your child's education, do get in touch with either your [local NPFS rep](#) or contact Barbara or Gillian at the NPFS office (0131 313 8842 or [office@npfs.org.uk](mailto:office@npfs.org.uk)) who will be happy to help.

Yours in partnership,

Iain Ellis, Chair

### Annual Conference update

The 2015 NPFS annual conference, on the theme of "Getting The Best For Your Child - Attainment For All", took place in Glasgow in November. We were delighted that Angela Constance, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, attended and delivered the keynote speech and took questions from the audience. Attendees were able to choose from a range of engaging workshops from partner organisations on themes such as raising attainment in English, additional support for learning, the new National Improvement Framework and the new approach to careers education.

Children and young people were also involved on the day. The marketplace showcased school enterprise stalls, and delegates were treated to musical

### Contact Us

Join our database to receive this E News Update and other relevant information from the National Parent Forum by [emailing](#) us your contact details.

Visit our [website](#). Follow us on Twitter and Facebook by clicking the icons at the top of this E Newsletter.

### Vacancies

performances by Glasgow school pupils.

More information including presentations and notes from the workshops can be found on [our website](#).

## Future plans

This year we will be embarking on an exciting new programme of local events across Scotland. These events will be taking place the length and breadth of the country, in Dundee, Shetland and many other locations. Follow us on social media for all the latest information.

## Review of parental involvement

The annual conference also saw an announcement by the Cabinet Secretary about the review of parental involvement that NPFS is leading on the delivery of. For more information, [click here](#).

We were delighted that the Cabinet Secretary chose our conference to announce the Review. A team of our local authority representatives, in conjunction with educational researchers, will spend 2016 looking at the Act and reviewing the current approach to parental engagement. Please get in touch with the [review team](#) if you want to share your views.

## New careers publication from NPFS

*Career Education: A World of Possibilities* is the latest edition to our popular '*... in a Nutshell*' series. This leaflet introduces the new approach to career education, and provides parents with an overview of what they can expect at different stages of their child's learning journey. It emphasises the range of different pathways that are now available to young people, and illustrates how these options can all lead to the positive outcome of a rewarding career.

*Career Education: A World of Possibilities* has been sent out via schools to every pupil. We hope that pupils will share the leaflet with their parent or carer, and that it will support discussions at whatever stage of their school life they are at.

We have been encouraging schools and parents to Tweet when they receive the Nutshell, ideally with a photo! Follow us on Twitter at [@parentforumscot](#) and on [Facebook](#)

The leaflet can also be accessed online at: <http://www.npfs.org.uk/career-education-a-world-of-possibilities/>

## National Improvement Framework

We currently have vacancies for representatives in the following areas: Angus, Argyll and Bute, East Lothian, Midlothian and Stirling. Please contact us or your local authority for further information.

## Becoming a rep

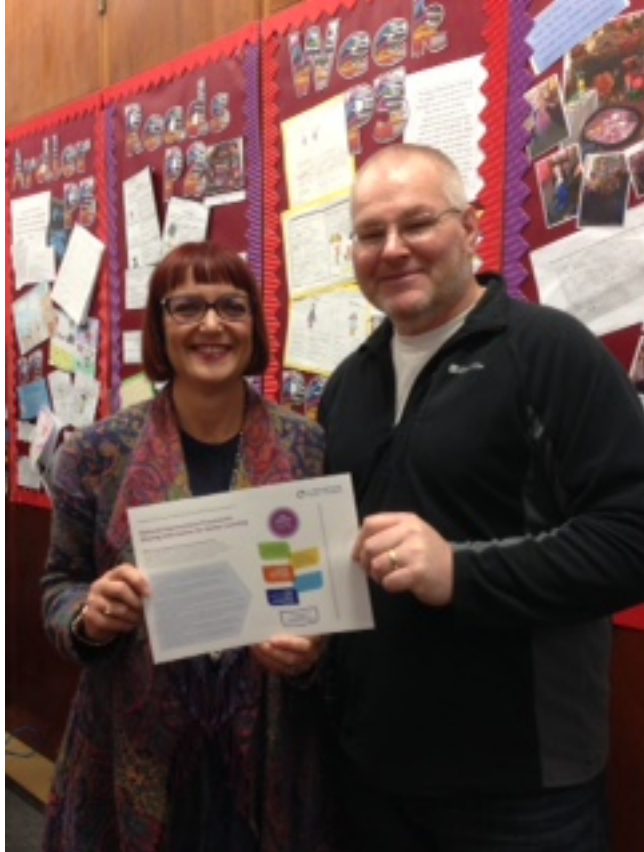
NPFS co-Vice Chair and Shetland rep Fiona Nicholson shares her views on why she decided to join NPFS:

"When my son first went to school I was keen to understand the system he was going through so that I was confident to help him in any way I could. I came across the NPFS website and signed up for the newsletter.

NPFS and my local authority had been jointly looking for someone to represent Shetland. In my local authority this role is open to all parents, and volunteers were sought through Parent Council meetings and information sent to schools.

My first meeting was the AGM in 2014. The amount of information available was overwhelming but the other new reps were keen to support me and I quickly found my feet and discovered areas which were of particular interest to me. It is important to NPFS that the reps are involved in stakeholder groups that the individual feels they can contribute to.

Over time I have built my knowledge and understanding of the whole education system and the importance of parents' inclusion at every level. I have played my part in



NPFS and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning launched a new Nutshell to provide parents with an overview of the National Improvement Framework (NIF).

Inain Ellis, Chair, said: "The Nutshell is intended to explain the NIF from a parents' perspective. It is important that parents continue to be at the centre of this important

development and that they are recognised and supported as being crucial to raising attainment and closing the gap."

The NIF aims to drive forward excellence and equity in education. Parental engagement is one of the five priority areas in the Framework. The current version of the Framework can be found [here](#).

The NPFS NIF Nutshell for parents can be found at: <http://www.npfs.org.uk/national-improvement-framework/>

Hard copies are available on request from the NPFS office - email [office@npfs.org.uk](mailto:office@npfs.org.uk) or call 0131 313 8842.

Parent Council Chairs may also be interested in this [information and presentation](#), which provide more details about the NIF and are designed for sharing with Parent Councils.

### Let's talk about maths

A group set up to challenge negative attitudes towards maths wants to hear the views of parents and young people. The Making Maths Count expert group, established by Education Secretary Angela Constance, has launched a short online questionnaire to find out how people feel about maths and use their maths skills. The group, which brings together expertise from industry, academia and science, has been tasked with identifying which factors can create negative attitudes towards maths, before making its recommendations on how to improve the nation's enthusiasm for and participation in the subject. Parents, carers, teachers and young people are all encouraged to contribute their thoughts as part of the group's call for evidence.

encouraging the many agencies to think about parents, and encouraged parents across the country to be involved in their children's learning.

Being a rep has been more rewarding than I ever thought, and I hope to continue to grow with the NPFS."

### Contact your local NPFS rep

Would you like to get in touch with your local NPFS rep and find out more about what's happening in your area and how you can get involved? Is there an issue you would like to raise with the Forum? Or perhaps you have an event that you would like the Forum to support. If so, you can find the contact details of all our local reps [here](#).

### New look for My World of Work

Parents are a key influence on children's career choices. The revamped My World of Work site has a section devoted entirely to parents, which will show you how to use [My World of Work](#) with your child and explore the different options they could take. The aim is to help parents feel informed and confident when supporting your children to make career decisions.

### Useful Contacts

[Children in Scotland](#) is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with

Further information and the online questionnaire are available at [www.gov.scot/makingmathscount](http://www.gov.scot/makingmathscount)

## Read, Write, Count in Libraries

The Read, Write, Count literacy and numeracy campaign for P1-P3 children and their parents was launched by the Scottish Government in August. Resources are being delivered to libraries across Scotland as part of the campaign. Go along to your local library to find out more.

You can also see the [new TV advert](#) from the campaign which has been shown across STV, Channel 4 and video on demand services throughout January and February.

Visit the [Read, Write, Count site](#) for more information and activities.

## OECD Report on Scottish education

A report of a review into Scottish education by a team of international experts from the OECD was recently published. The review specifically looked at the Broad General Education stage of the Curriculum for Excellence.

The review found that levels of academic achievement are above international averages in science and reading and close to average in maths, and that achievement levels are spread relatively equally. However the report also identified a number of problems and challenges, including a fifth of schools being assessed as only "satisfactory" in school inspections, and one in 10 rated as "weak or unsatisfactory". The report also said that more should be done to improve assessment and to support low performing schools.

More information:

<http://www.npfs.org.uk/2015/12/17/oecd-review-of-scottish-education/>

## Getting it right for every child

From the 31 August 2016 key parts of the *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) approach, put into law by The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, will ensure the support that is offered to children and young people is consistent and effective wherever they live or learn.

GIRFEC is the national approach to how our services aim to promote, support and safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. Promoting children's and young people's rights, it supports them and their parents to work in partnership with the services that

children and their families in Scotland.

Education Scotland's [Parentzone](#) website provides you with up to date information about your child's education.

[Enquire](#) is the Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning

[Respectme](#) Scotland's national anti-bullying service, supporting all adults involved in the lives of children and young people to give them the practical skills and confidence to deal with bullying. The site includes information specifically for parents.

[Parentline](#) helpline provides support and information for parent / carers and families on 0800 282233

[SQA](#) helps people to fulfil their potential and to achieve their ambitions by providing a wide range of high quality, internationally recognised qualifications and associated services.

can help them. Following the latest release of draft guidance in December 2015 to support the new law, the Scottish Government is working with NPFS to ensure children, young people and parents have easy access to information about the new law and what it means for them.

Find out more at [www.gov.scot/girfec](http://www.gov.scot/girfec)

## Reporting to parents - have your say

How can reporting be improved for parents and children? Take part in NPFS' survey on reporting to parents and let us know. We are seeking views on issues such as: What do you as a parent receive in terms of reporting, and what would you like to get? Do you understand what your child's report means? What does the report help you and your child achieve?

The questionnaire will go live on 7 March and will be available at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/parentsandreporting>

## Parent-school communication tips

Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, has published a [blog](#) providing parents and carers with tips for successful communication with their child's school. Although the advice is primarily aimed at parents of children with additional support needs, the information is helpful for all parents.

And for school staff, there is another [blog](#) with some suggestions for working well with parents, based on NPFS' own Plea from Parents and Code of Practice.

## Cost of the School Day

NPFS was delighted to be able to welcome the researchers behind the Cost of the School Day project to our Forum meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> January. The research recommends that all schools, not just those in areas of multiple deprivation, should consider ways in which they can "poverty-proof".

More than one in five children across Scotland are officially recognised as living in poverty. Insufficient household income can mean that some children don't have the resources needed for school and can't easily afford to take part in school activities which cost money. This can put them at risk of missing out on opportunities at school, and feel different, excluded and unhappy.

Although the review concentrated on the Glasgow area, our reps agreed that this issue is relevant across the

country.

The report and executive summary can be found online here: <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/cost-school-day-report-and-executive-summary>

## NPFS in Wales

NPFS was delighted to receive an invitation from the Welsh Government to attend their national education conference and share information about the Scottish model of parental involvement.

Co-Vice Chair Joanna Murphy travelled down to Cardiff to take part in the parent panel at the 'A Curriculum for Wales, A Curriculum For Life' conference on 22 October. Wales is embarking on a programme of educational reform and they are keen to learn from Scotland's experience of introducing a new curriculum. NPFS met with a delegation from the Welsh Government when they visited Scotland to learn more about different aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. As part of the discussions, Joanna met with the delegates and provided a parental perspective on the Curriculum.

Joanna said, "I got a real sense of how valuable the voice of parents was to those working on curricular reform. The Welsh Government is very keen to build on the Scottish example, and to use our experience to inform their own approach to parental involvement."

## Gender balance project

There are no such things as "girls' subjects" or "boys' subjects" - just subjects! That's one of the key messages behind a new schools project launched by Skills Development Scotland, the Institute of Physics and Education Scotland, which NPFS is supporting.

The project works with pupils, teachers, parents and local authorities to challenge the issues that can lead to stereotyping when it comes to choosing school subjects, and to question 'traditional' views about career choices for boys and girls.

Improving Gender Balance Scotland is being delivered in six school clusters in five regions - South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Glasgow, Fife and West Lothian.

Joanna Murphy, NPFS Vice Chair, said: "Parents play a crucial role in helping their child think about how their interests, skills and strengths can feed into subject choices at school, and how these can connect to a career path. As parents, we hope that our child will have a fulfilling and rewarding career, but in order to achieve this, we need to help our children think beyond the stereotypes and to follow their interests, not the herd."

For more information, visit: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2015/december/improving-gender-balance-scotland/>

## Share your stories about apprenticeships

NPFS is supporting the [Developing the Young Workforce](#) agenda, which aims to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021. As part of this work, we're interested in hearing from young people who are undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) or Modern Apprenticeships (MA). If you know of a young person who would like to share their story - for instance, why they decided to take the apprenticeship route, what they have learned from it, what advice they would pass on to other young people - [please put them in touch with us](#) and we can help share their experiences.

We're also keen to hear from parents, including parents who are employers, about their experiences of FAs and MAs, whether this is your own child's story or your experience of working with young people undertaking an apprenticeship.

## An Inter-disciplinary approach to education - The Social Enterprise Academy

The HI Social Enterprise in Schools programme provides support to pupils and teachers throughout the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area so that they can set up successful, pupil-led social enterprises in their schools.

The programme has already worked with 600 schools and over 1000 teachers and each year there is an awards ceremony to celebrate their success.

The programmes are aimed at supporting young people to discover their entrepreneurial and employability skills and to introduce them to social enterprise as a way of doing better business. The Academy works with pupils aged 3-18.

Establishing a social enterprise in a school allows young people to engage in the practical and creative skills required to run a business. It improves confidence, increases self-esteem and enriches their sense of social justice. They also have a real life learning experience that is relevant and fun!

Pupils across Scotland are running community cafes, recycling bikes and uniforms, holding events, stationery stores, craft shops and are tackling all kinds of social issues including cyber-bullying, healthy eating or raising awareness of fair trade.

The programme helps with every step, from getting the initial ideas together to developing business plans and launching the enterprise.

## Stay safe online

9 February was Safer Internet Day. For advice on helping your children stay safe, have a look at the information on [Parentzone](#), including links to further sources of advice for parents. Did you know that Microsoft Scotland offers Safer Families training sessions? For more about the programme and other Microsoft information on online safety, contact [Fiona Ramsay](#) or head to: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/about/family-safety/#/>

Click [here](#) for more information and to book a visit, or contact [Tracy Rennie](#), Futures Education Co-ordinator.

## Changes to your child's school - what parents need to know

The Scottish Government has produced a document which is designed to act as an information tool for parents when their local authority is proposing a major change to their child's school. It sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of the local authority, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government. It also informs parents of their role in the process and how you can play your part.

The leaflet will also be published [here](#).

E [enquiries@parentforumscotland.org](mailto:enquiries@parentforumscotland.org) W [parentforumscotland.org](http://parentforumscotland.org)  [@parentforumscot](https://twitter.com/parentforumscot)  
 [parentforumscotland](https://www.facebook.com/parentforumscotland)

Copyright &copy 2015 The National Parent Forum of Scotland, all rights reserved.

[Want to unsubscribe or change your details?](#)

[Powered by Drop Design Mailer](#)