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Education and Culture Committee

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In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



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**Additional Evidence for the Education and Culture Committee
23rd Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) – Tuesday 7 October 2014**

Following the meeting of the Committee on Tuesday 7 October 2014 I now submit further evidence in response to the issues raised during discussions. The attached document contains further details on the following topics:

- Employer Engagement in Curriculum for Excellence
- Scottish Studies
- Career pathways information

I have also asked my officials to provide the clerk with copies of the Great Learning Leaflet and the 2003 Education Committee Report that can be distributed to all Committee members.

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Employer Engagement in Curriculum for Excellence

Employers are critical to the success of Curriculum for Excellence and that is why on-going partnership and engagement with employers in the planning and delivery of CfE is crucial.

It is vital that employers are aware of the impact that Curriculum for Excellence will have on our young workforce and the increased range of skills and attributes that young people will have as a result of it.

To support this, the Scottish Government and its partners have undertaken a wide range of engagement activities to raise awareness and understanding amongst employers of:

- The purpose of CfE
- The changes to the National Qualifications and what this means for them
- The benefits CfE will deliver for their business
- The opportunities CfE offers them to become involved in the planning and delivery of the curriculum to ensure young people leave school with the skills and experience employers need

Ministerial engagements with employers

Dr Allan has undertaken a series of employer engagement events, aimed at raising awareness of CfE amongst employers and strengthening school/business links. These have been locally-led events and have been particularly helpful in engaging SMEs, which can often be the most difficult to reach businesses. Local Chambers of Commerce and education partners have been involved in these events too. Employers and education authorities from North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, Western Isles, East Lothian and Midlothian have been involved in these events, as well as a range of national partners.

This series of events has complemented meetings Mr Russell held with Edinburgh and Glasgow Chambers of Commerce last year.

Alongside these local events, the Scottish Government, in partnership with ADES and the Prince's Trust, delivered a large national Conference in May this year, entitled 'Learning to Earning: Preparing Young People for the World of Work'. This brought together senior education leaders, employers, employer organisations, FE, HE and Third Sector organisations to build links between the sectors and highlight the role of employers as partners in CfE.

Information for employers

A range of material explaining the changes to the National Qualifications, and the rationale behind these changes, has been sent out to employers via a wide range of business networks including Scottish Chambers of Commerce, CBI Scotland, Federation of Small Businesses and the STUC. Smaller business networks have also helped to communicate this information with their members. These

communications have been sent via newsletters, e-zines and Tweets to members. Scottish Government will continue to work with these business networks to share information about changes to Highers and Advanced Highers to ensure employers understand what these changes mean for them.

The Scottish Government also has a webpage for employers to provide them with more information about CfE and the new National Qualifications:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/Employers>

National education partners' engagement with employers

Our national education partners, including SDS, Education Scotland and SQA, have also been undertaking a programme of engagement activities with employers across Scotland to raise awareness of CfE and explain the changes to National Qualifications.

These have included:

- The publication of leaflets for employers, such as:
 - SQA's employer's guide to the National Qualifications:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/BD6794_CfE_Employers_guide.pdf
 - SCQF's Old Vs New guide to Scottish National Qualifications:
[http://www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/Old%20Vs%20New%20\(low%20res\)%20-%20Updated%20July%202013.pdf](http://www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/Old%20Vs%20New%20(low%20res)%20-%20Updated%20July%202013.pdf)
- Dedicated webpages for employers, such as:
 - SDS's Our Skillsforce website:
<http://www.ourskillsforce.co.uk/skills-planning-hr-support/education-qualifications/understanding-qualifications/>
- Direct contact through meetings and events.

Scottish Studies and Scots Language

The teaching and learning of Scots within the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) provides opportunities for children and young people to become confident individuals, giving them knowledge of cultural heritage and a national perspective. The Curriculum for Excellence series, Building the Curriculum 1: recognises that 'Scotland has a rich diversity of language, including Scots' and clearly states that teachers should strongly encourage and promote the use of the language the child or young person is using to communicate.

The CfE curriculum materials for Literacy and English recognise the important place of Scots and Scottish texts:

The languages, dialects and literature of Scotland provide a rich resource for children and young people to learn about Scotland's culture, identity and language. Through engaging with a wide range of texts they will develop an appreciation of Scotland's vibrant literary and linguistic heritage and its indigenous languages and dialects. This principle suffuses the experiences and outcomes and it is expected that practitioners will build upon the diversity of language represented within the communities of Scotland, valuing the languages which children and young people bring to school.

In 2011, a Scottish Studies Working Group was established. This was chaired by the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Dr Alasdair Allan, and aimed to provide strategic advice and direction to support the implementation of the 2011 manifesto commitment that:

"We will develop the concept of "Scottish Studies" in our schools, creating a distinct strand of learning focused on Scotland and incorporating Scottish History, Scottish Literature, the Scots and Gaelic Languages, wider Scottish culture and Scottish current affairs. All pupils will have access to this strand at Primary and Secondary levels."

The main focus of the group was how best to implement this strand in the secondary sector while giving consideration to opportunities for younger pupils to participate in learning about Scotland as part of a broad general education. The group included representation from universities, practitioners, Gaelic and Scots language interests, Scottish literature interests, Education Scotland and the SQA.

The group met on 4 occasions and published a report with recommendations in March 2012. The group's discussions included exploring how to provide a greater focus on Scots and Gaelic and also how to improve learning about Scotland within different curricular areas as part of a broad general education. There was also strong interest from the HE sector.

There has been progress with a number of recommendations including the launch of a Studying Scotland on-line resource, the creation of Scottish Studies awards, the establishment of a network of Scots Language Co-ordinators, the preparation of Scots language units and more.

Scottish Studies Awards

The Scottish Studies award involves the Study of Scotland in terms of its people, languages (Scots and Gaelic), society, culture, natural and built environment and heritage. It provides many opportunities for learners to develop skills, knowledge and understanding and to make connections across the curriculum.

It has a broad and flexible framework with one mandatory unit and a choice of 2 or 3 other units from a variety of subjects depending on the level of the award (available SCQF levels 2 through 6) which they can study in a Scottish context. The SS award (at varying levels) is available from S3 secondary school through to adult learners in colleges.

The purpose of the award is to allow learners to broaden their knowledge of Scotland whilst developing and applying the skills, knowledge and understanding to their chosen subject area. It also provides learners with support in taking the initiative to become independent learners.

The 2013/2014 uptake for the award was: 34 candidates at SCQF level 3, 306 at level 4 and 152 at level 5. The Higher (SCQF level 6) Award was implemented in August 2014 and therefore candidate entries for this level are still being processed.

Officials are working with key Scots language organisations and Education Scotland to promote uptake of the award.

Oor Wullie's Guide tae Scots Language

The National Library of Scotland in association with DC Thompson has created an Oor Wullie website that provides extra materials for primary school classes to help them start learning Scots.

A number of primary school teachers were already using the Oor Wullie strip in class as it has shown to help reluctant readers being less intimidating than a book and helped them become more confident readers.

The website provides a range of interactive material and downloadable, printer-friendly challenges. Such things include a multiple choice quiz, an audio glossary

and even a template that will allow learners to make their own edition of Wullie's home newspaper: The Auchentogle Bugle.

Curriculum for Excellence has been borne in mind throughout the planning and progress of the project tapping into key areas of language learning, social studies, expressive arts and literacy.

Some of the learning opportunities provided by the website include Scots language, poetry and music. Storytelling and creative writing. Communicating, problem solving and co-operating.

It is hoped that this will show learners that Scots language and culture can be fun to learn and that by using Oor Wullie it will allow younger learners to connect with older family members as they remember their own childhoods reading Oor Wullie.

Learner Pathways Information

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) as a whole is about providing learners with the range of learning pathways that meet their individual needs and aspirations, and prepare them for learning, life and work.

Under Curriculum for Excellence, we have moved away from a narrow focus to a much broader based educational experience. CfE offers a more flexible curriculum, with greater personalisation and choice, to meet the needs of every learner. It should ensure that young people leave school with not only qualifications, but with crucial skills to succeed in the workplace and in life – such as confidence, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and adaptability.

In the Senior Phase schools, and their partners, now have greater flexibility to offer a range of pathways for all their learners, increasing the choice and opportunities available to them.

Education Scotland have worked with young people, schools and their partners to develop a range of online materials, which show examples of potential pathways that young people might take through their Senior Phase curriculum. As part of this they have filmed video clips of Headteachers and young people themselves talking about their achievement/ learner pathways.

For further information see:

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/howdoyoubuildyourcurriculum/achievementpathways/introduction.asp>