

Recommendations to local authorities

Recommendations to **Scottish Government and national agencies**

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22. Local authorities should identify a parental involvement officer who can take forward parental involvement and engagement in an effective and co-ordinated way.

This officer should promote parental engagement through multi-agency meetings and work in partnership with the local National Parent Forum of Scotland representative and other parents. Joint-working is also required with relevant national parenting organisations and the third sector. Steps should be taken to ensure the role is fully supported and financed. It is acknowledged that, for some local authorities, this will not be a full-time post. The role requires to be wider than schools and should include working across different sectors and different teams as well as collaboration across local authority services.

23 Local authorities should ensure that adequate funding for parental involvement and engagement is built into all policies, programmes and strategies to improve outcomes and increase attainment for children, young people and parents in line with the drivers of the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan.

24 Reasonable funding must be allocated to Parent Councils by all local authorities.

This should be sufficient to cover items such as: regular communications with parents (printing and postage, text communications or email facilities); a clerk to support the operation of the Parent Council; and training and information sessions for the Parent Council. Training programmes for Parent Councils should be specifically tailored to help build the capacity of parents. This could include training on digital media to enable Parent Councils to communicate more effectively and safely with the wider parent forum. These programmes should always be made available in a digital format to ensure wider access.

25 Local authorities should take further steps to raise awareness among parents on the procedures for recruiting senior school staff, and should continue to support parents to become involved in the recruitment process.

Where local authorities use assessment centres or similar procedures as part of the recruitment process for Directors of Education/Children's Services and/or Chief Education Officers, parents should be involved in this process. Where a senior post is filled on a temporary basis, the headteacher or local authority should have a responsibility to discuss this process with the Parent Council in order to help inform parents.

26 Local authorities should include provision on enrolment forms to allow email addresses to be shared with the Parent Council.

Enrolment procedures should include provision for the details of both resident parents and non-resident parents.

27 The Education (Scotland) Act (2016) requires local authorities each year to prepare and publish details of activities undertaken regarding their parental involvement strategy. They should comply in full with this requirement while also ensuring that parental engagement is

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included in the broader National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan reports. These reports should be jargon-free and written in plain English.

The parental engagement strategy, whether it is a stand-alone strategy or integrated into a broader improvement strategy, should be easily located on the local authority's website or through normal communication channels, including a link from school websites. The parental involvement strategy, or the relevant aspects of the broader improvement plan, should contain measurable outcomes on parental involvement and engagement, and progress should be monitored.

28 Local authorities should encourage and facilitate the creation and running of a Parent Council and parent forum umbrella group in their local area.

Local authorities should consult with this group on all significant matters that have an impact on education. This group should endeavour to attract parents who reflect the range of diverse and cultural backgrounds and family shapes present in the parent forum including non-resident parents and marginalised groups.

29 All education committees (or equivalent) should have two parent members with full voting rights (where the education committee has such a format), elected from this umbrella group or by direct election by parents. Parent members on the education committee should regularly attend the umbrella group meetings (where applicable) and report back to them and Parent Councils.

For the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland, one member will be sufficient. Guidance should be provided for elected members on best practice for including and involving parents in committee meetings.

30 Local authorities should support the Parent Councils within a learning community, including pre-5 settings, to meet regularly, so that best practice can be shared.

Secondary schools should consider working in clusters to share best practice, aid transitions and work collaboratively.

31 Local authorities should ensure that parents in all communities have access to family learning opportunities that meet their needs.

32 Local authorities should support schools to develop strategies to involve parents in the life and work of the school and engage in their children's learning.

These strategies should be part of the school's improvement plan.

33 During the course of this research, the Review Reference Group became aware of initial plans by SEEMiS (the local authority management information system provider for schools) to develop additional functionality relating to communications with parents. The Review

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recommends that the National Parent Forum of Scotland and other national parenting organisations are fully involved in consultation on any changes to SEEMiS functionality so that parents have an opportunity to help shape any improvements.