



**Reform of the SQA and Education Scotland: advisor draft remit
July 2021
Children in Scotland**

Children in Scotland

Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do.

By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland.

We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

Children in Scotland is pleased to respond to the consultation on the draft remit of the Advisor. Education is a key aspect of children and young people's lives. We look forward to Scotland delivering on its commitment to our young people to be the best place in the world to grow up and learn.

Scope

We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to change and progress in education, based on the OECD report's recommendations, specifically around the national curriculum, assessment and qualifications.

Any supporting panel must be representative of Scottish society today and must be a respectful, shared and equal space. It must work in an open and transparent way.

The children and young people we have worked with through the pandemic have shared that they have felt very much in the dark with regards to decisions made in the current education system over the

past year. This must change moving forward. They are key stakeholders and have a right to hold an equal space in this process.

We welcome the commitment of the Advisor to engage widely with children, young people and families to fully understand their needs and co-design an education system with them and for them.

We would urge that this must be with the support of organisations that are already working with children, young people and families. This will ensure a range of experiences are heard, including those with additional support needs, those who are not currently in education, BPoC children and young people and early years children.

We would also urge the Scottish Government and the Advisor to meet children, young people and families where they 'are', not invite children and young people into an adult system such as Scottish Government meetings. The children and young people we have worked with over the past year want to be listened to and want a wide range of their voices to be heard, but want decision-makers to come to them to ensure this happens.

Activities

Children in Scotland acknowledges the range and importance of the suggested activities for the Advisor to undertake.

We welcome the acknowledgment that activities must take a child rights approach, with the best interest of children and young people at the heart of activities and decisions.

We also welcome a consideration of the needs of different sectors working with and for children and young people and taking account of priorities across wider services for children, such as around closing the poverty-related attainment gap and child poverty.

What is essential is the central role of children and young people in this process.

They have already shared their experiences, opinions and suggestions in various ways, including through the Education Recovery Youth Panel, and various COVID-19 reports such as Intercultural Youth Scotland's Covid In Colour report. It is essential to build on what children and young people have shared already to avoid over-consultation.

Any tokenistic consultation is not acceptable. Children and young people's further participation must be meaningful, ongoing and cover all aspects of the Advisor's remit, including accreditation, assessment,

curriculum, and the creation of new national bodies. These bodies must be answerable to children and young people - their key stakeholders.

We would ask that all findings published are accessible for all, including children and young people. This might include infographics, films etc.

Timescales

We acknowledge the Advisor will start this work in September 2021 and the initial stage may take six months.

We would ask the Scottish Government to remain flexible on this timeline. It is essential this work gets it right for all of Scotland's children and young people. It may involve wholesale change. This will take time, money and collaboration.

Children and young people's experiences and opinions

We work extensively with children and young people, ensuring their voices are heard and considered by decision-makers, inline with Article 12 under the UNCRC.

Education is a central aspect of children and young people's lives. It has been a real focus of concern for them over the past year and a half, throughout the pandemic.

We would draw your attention to Children in Scotland's children and young people's advisory group, Changing Our World's recent campaign around the exam/assessment process:

<https://childreninscotland.org.uk/changing-our-world/changing-our-world-manifesto-campaign-work/>

They also shared their views with Scotland Can on the same topic:

<https://www.wecan.scot/the-fallacy-of-the-covid-catch-up/>

And Coll, now a former member of Changing Our World as he moves on to university, shared his views in more detail:

<https://www.wecan.scot/we-dont-need-this-education/>

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