



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

1st Meeting, 2016 (Session 5)

Wednesday 15 June 2016

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in the Robert Burns Room (CR1).

1. **Declaration of interests:** Members of the Committee will be invited to declare any relevant interests.
2. **Choice of Convener:** The Committee will choose a Convener.
3. **Choice of Deputy Convener:** The Committee will choose a Deputy Convener.
4. **Legacy Report:** The Committee will consider the Education and Culture Committee Session 4 Legacy Report.
5. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take item 6 in private.
6. **Work programme:** The Committee will consider its approach to developing its work programme.

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Edinburgh
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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

Agenda item 1

Declaration of Interests

ES/S5/16/1/1

Agenda item 2 and 3

Choice of Convener and Deputy

ES/S5/16/1/2

Agenda item 4

Education and Culture Committee Legacy Report

ES/S5/16/1/3

Agenda item 5

Paper from the Clerk

ES/S5/16/1/4

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

1st Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), 15 June 2016

Declaration of interests

Introduction

1. At the first Committee meeting, members will be invited to make an initial declaration of any interests which are relevant to the remit of the Committee.
2. If a member has an interest which is relevant to an item being discussed at a Committee meeting, the member must also declare that interest before participating in the meeting.

Declarable interests

3. If a member has a registrable interest in any category of the register (apart from the voluntary category), this is also potentially a declarable interest. Declaring relevant interests before participating in Parliamentary proceedings is a statutory requirement under the Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament Act 2006 and failure to do so is a breach of the Code of Conduct and also a criminal offence.
4. Section 3 (Volume 2) of the Code of Conduct for MSPs explains in detail the rules on declaration of interests and more guidance is also available in Volume 3, Section 3.
5. It is the responsibility of the individual Member to be aware of the rules on the declaration of interests and to judge whether a registered interest is sufficiently relevant to particular proceedings to require a declaration. The Standards Clerks can provide further advice on this.

Declaration of interests at the first Committee meeting

6. At the first Committee meeting, all members will be invited to declare any registrable interests which are relevant to the remit of this Committee. The declaration can be brief but should be sufficiently informative to enable a listener to understand the nature of the Member's interest. **It is not sufficient simply to refer to the register entry but nor is it necessary to rehearse all the details of an interest as it appears in the Register.**
7. If Members have any questions about what might constitute a declarable interest, they can contact the Committee clerks prior to the meeting. The Standards Clerks are also happy to provide advice.

Declaration of interests at subsequent Committee meetings

8. Members are also required to declare any relevant registrable interests at subsequent committee meetings if they are relevant to the business under discussion. Such a declaration has to be made at each meeting where it is relevant and before participating in those proceedings. This allows the public attending or reading the report of any Committee meeting to understand the nature of the member's interest.
9. Although this is not a registrable interest, the Code also advises Members, as good practice, to declare any business or personal relationships they might have with any advisers or witnesses to the Committee.

Clerk to the Committee
10 June 2016

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

1st Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), 15 June 2016

Choice of Convener and Deputy Convener

Purpose of paper

1. This paper explains the procedure for choosing a Convener and Deputy Convener at the first meeting of the Committee.

Oldest Member

2. Standing Orders oblige all committees to choose a Convener at their first meeting. Rule 12.1.6 states that the meeting is to be chaired by the Oldest Committee Member until a Convener is chosen. The “Oldest Committee Member” is defined as the oldest member of the Committee present at the meeting and who has indicated to the Clerk that he or she agrees to chair the meeting.

Choice of Convener

3. On 1 June 2016, the Parliament agreed to motion S5M-00278 which resolved that members of the Scottish National Party are eligible to be chosen as Convener of the Education and Skills Committee. The Oldest Committee Member will invite a nomination from members of that party for the convenership. There is no requirement for nominations to be submitted in advance of the meeting or to be seconded.
4. Committee members will then be invited to appoint the nominated person as Convener.
5. On being chosen by the Committee, the Convener will immediately take the chair and will chair the rest of the meeting.

Choice of Deputy Convener

6. Motion S5M-00278 also stated that members of the Scottish Labour Party are eligible to be chosen as Deputy Convener of the Education and Skills Committee.
7. The procedure for choosing a Deputy Convener is the same as that for the Convener and will be conducted by the newly-chosen Convener.

Clerk to the Committee
10 June 2016

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

1st Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), 15 June 2016

Legacy Report Cover Paper

Purpose

1. The Committee will be asked to consider the Session 4 Education and Culture Committee's Legacy Report.

Legacy Reports

2. At the end of a Parliamentary session Committees usually publish a Legacy Report to pass on the knowledge and experience, both in terms of policy and Committee working practices. [The Education and Culture Committee's Legacy Report can be found online](#) and is included as an annexe to this paper.

Action

3. The Committee is invited to thank the members of the Education and Culture Committee for the report and agree to consider the report again when it agrees its work programme after the summer recess.

Clerk to the Committee
10 June 2016



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Published 17th March 2016

SP Paper 962

6th Report, 2016 (Session 4)

Web

Education and Culture Committee

Legacy Report



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Education and Culture Committee

The remit of the Committee is to consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; matters relating to youth employment, skills and employment training, implementation of the recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, Skills Development Scotland and other matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training, and matters relating to culture and the arts falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs.



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Committee Membership



Convener
Stewart Maxwell
Scottish National Party



Deputy Convener
Mark Griffin
Scottish Labour



George Adam
Scottish National Party



Colin Beattie
Scottish National Party



Chic Brodie
Scottish National Party



Gordon MacDonald
Scottish National Party



Liam McArthur
Scottish Liberal
Democrats



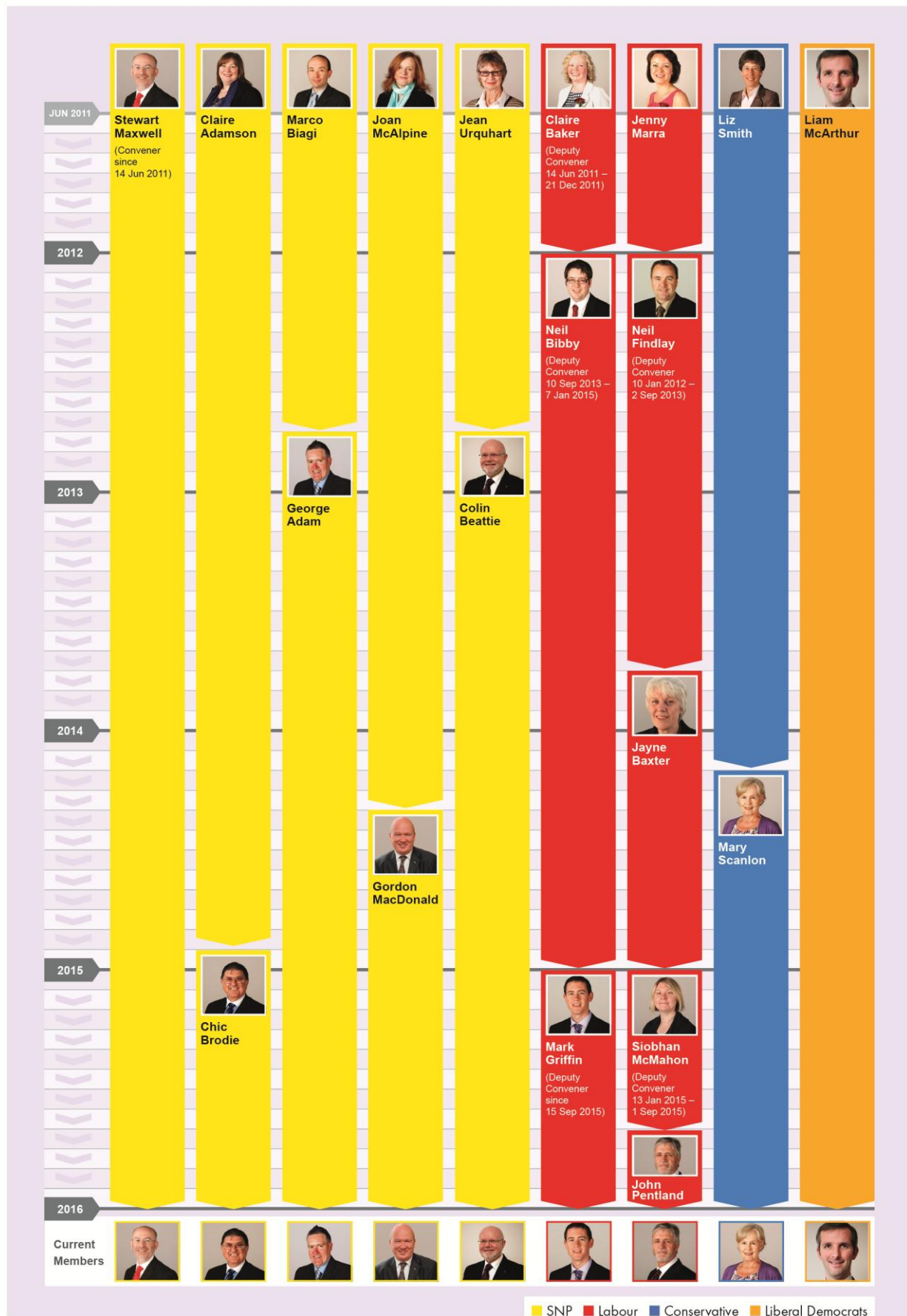
John Pentland
Scottish Labour



Mary Scanlon
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party

Education and Culture Committee

Legacy Report, 6th Report, 2016 (Session 4)



Introduction

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise our work and achievements over the course of Session 4 with the aim of informing the work of our successor committee.
2. The report highlights our engagement and innovative working practices that have been particularly effective, and then sets out policy areas that we think merit further scrutiny.

Overview of our work

3. Over the last five years we have conducted inquiries and scrutinised legislation with the aim of holding the Scottish Government and its agencies to account. We have delivered our work in a coherent and planned manner, creating linkages where possible, particularly between our inquiries and budget scrutiny.
4. Through our inquiry work we have sought to highlight areas for improvement and to raise the profile of issues within our remit. Also, in line with the Presiding Officer's Programme for Change, we have sought to safeguard time in our work programme to hold one-off evidence sessions with the aim of responding to topical issues and contributing to current debates.
5. We scrutinised draft legislation across a varied range of subjects within our remit. Throughout, we have worked to achieve consensus in committee and to make the bills in question more effective. In doing so, we have found it useful to carry out pre-legislative scrutiny, to engage with members of the public and enhance our understanding of complex and sensitive topics.
6. It has been very helpful to receive the Scottish Government's responses to our Stage 1 reports ahead of the relevant debate on bills. To assist our scrutiny at Stage 2, it is always useful to receive early indication from the Government about its intention to introduce new provisions.
7. The headline figures for what we have done in Session 4 are shown on the next page. Full details of our work are also set out in our five annual reports¹.
8. This report provides a broad overview of the session, and highlights key points under the following five policy headings: children in care; school education; further and higher education; culture and the arts; and financial scrutiny. We also highlight some other topics that we have not examined in depth that the successor committee may wish to consider.
9. Before looking at these policy areas, we set out how we have engaged with the people of Scotland and adopted innovative ways of working.

Education and Culture Committee

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Bills scrutinised



152

Committee meetings



710

Number of people
who gave evidence

Inquiries held



Reports published

Engagement and innovation

10. Our engagement and interaction has been critical to our ability to hold the Scottish Government and other bodies to account.
11. The wide range of views and opinions we heard from people from all walks of life – including children in care, school pupils with sensory impairments, parents, teachers, those working in the voluntary sector and charities as well as education professionals – have been vital in helping to shape our views and inform our work. We thank everyone who has provided an input over the session.
12. We have reflected these views in our reports and this has influenced the Scottish Government to bring forward policy changes and legislation. For example, our children in care inquiries led to proposals for enhanced support for care leavers included in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, and the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill was amended in response to the evidence we heard and our report's recommendations.
13. Throughout the session, we have tried to use innovative methods to share ideas and to work with individuals and organisations with an interest in education and culture policy. Some of the ways in which we have done this include:
 - creating a Facebook Group to invite views and share information in British Sign Language;
 - holding many informal briefings and fact-finding visits to meet people face-to-face and give them the opportunity to speak openly and freely;
 - using online surveys to seek the views of parents about their children's educational attainment and, separately, about how well the BBC was doing; and
 - using social media to invite engagement with the public.
14. We have found evidence-gathering through informal meetings and discussions to be a particularly good method of seeking views and input from the public. We recognise the importance of promoting accessibility and transparency in all of our work and have ensured those activities are recorded and the views obtained referenced in our reports.



Education and Culture Committee

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15. Through our work, we have sought to make a tangible difference to the lives of people in Scotland. Two particular examples that we discuss later show how we reached out to previously disengaged people in Scotland:

- children and young people who we met during in-depth inquiries into the educational attainment of children in care and aspects of the care system; and
- BSL users and the wider Deaf community, in connection with our scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill.



16. We have also sought to respond to topical issues and key events. For example, we were one of only two committees that sought to inform the referendum debate through inquiry work. Our inquiry into Scotland's educational and cultural future considered the various proposals in the Scottish Government's white paper relevant to our remit.

17. Also, in our first year, we held a series of six one-off evidence sessions on a range of education issues billed as an „end of term“ review of Government policy. The evidence we gathered informed our subsequent questioning of the Cabinet Secretary.

18. We highlight the innovative ways in which we engaged with people and groups over the course of the session and suggest our successor committee continues to work in similar ways in Session 5. In particular, we have found informal and open discussions to be especially good methods of gathering views and opinions, while paying attention to the need to ensure our work is open and accessible.

Children in care

Support for children and families

19. Over a two-year period, from 2011-13, we examined issues relating to the education and wellbeing of children in care. First, we considered the reasons why these children tend to achieve fewer qualifications than their peers by carrying out an inquiry into the education attainment of looked after children. We then went on to examine, as a separate inquiry, whether the decision-making processes involved in taking a child into care delivered the best outcomes for children and their families.
20. As part of our engagement activity, we conducted a major series of external visits to primary and secondary schools, a college, a children's unit and to Who Cares? Scotland. During these visits we met children, young people and parents with experience of the care system, as well as professionals who provide support for affected families. The visits were extremely important opportunities to discuss people's experiences of the care system in a sensitive manner, and to hear about their concerns and challenges. While the visits were arranged as private events we published a note of the key points, which we treated as formal evidence to our inquiry. These meetings also built up our expertise and knowledge, demonstrating the value of taking a longer term approach and building up good relationships with the sector.
21. We adopted an innovative and collaborative approach to finalising our report on the evidence we heard. We published an interim report that provided the basis for further discussion with the sector – including children in care and representatives from all of the principal support organisations – which led to our final report.
22. During an event in the Parliament, children and young people performed a short play based on their experiences of being in care, which was followed by group break-out sessions. These discussions helped us develop workable and robust recommendations for improving the outcomes of children in care, and contributed to action being taken by the Scottish Government and other decision making bodies. For example, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill included provisions to enhance throughcare and aftercare support for young people.



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23. We also held a plenary debate for MSPs to debate the issues, which also helped inform our final report.



24. We received praise from young care leavers who told us about the difference we had made to their lives through our inclusive approach and listening to their views:

“I am genuinely a different person from the one you met a year ago. I am braver, I am stronger and I am more committed than ever to achieving, to bucking the trend and to leading by example ... You invited us in when others were locking us out, much of the time subconsciously ... You have sent a strong message to every MSP and decision maker in this Parliament and beyond, and we have sent a strong message of hope and change to Scotland’s children and young people ... What we have seen in this inquiry is democracy in action, and I will do all that I can to ensure that it continues.”

25. We have already noted some of the relevant provisions of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. We also highlight that this legislation will introduce the concept of the „named person“, which has been the subject of petitions to the Court of Session and then the UK Supreme Court.

26. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is now in force and our successor committee may wish to monitor the implementation of the legislation. In particular, the committee could consider whether the Act is improving outcomes for children and young people with a care background, and the effectiveness of the named person provisions.

Children's commissioner

27. As part of our scrutiny of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, we considered proposals to extend the investigatory powers of Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People.
28. We questioned the Commissioner on several occasions about how he would use the new powers and how his actions would benefit vulnerable children. We also considered the resources required for the Commissioner to exercise the new powers.
29. As the Commissioner is a parliamentary appointment, all costs associated with the office are met by the SPCB. On this basis, we also considered the Commissioner's work more generally, focusing on his office's future priorities and objectives, in the context of his 2013-14 annual report.
30. We found these evidence sessions to be useful and informative. Given the SPCB's responsibility for meeting the costs of the Commissioner's office, we recommend our successor committee continues to hold regular sessions to scrutinise the Commissioner's work and performance.

School education

Attainment gap

31. The educational attainment gap in Scotland has been a key focus for us throughout 2015 and into 2016. Our work involved looking at various topics that could help to narrow the gap, while we also held a dedicated inquiry into the attainment of pupils with a sensory impairment.
32. This work linked with our scrutiny of the Education (Scotland) Bill, which included provisions to address the attainment gap, and our examination of school spending.
33. We questioned the Scottish Government and local authorities on the issues that emerged, and followed-up issues in writing with the cabinet secretary in our continuing attempts to hold the Government to account. In these ways, our work contributed to what has become one of the most high profile debates both inside and outside the Parliament.
34. Our involvement of parents was particularly successful. We commissioned an online survey seeking views on how schools communicated with families and how this could be improved. We were delighted to receive over 2,500 responses to the survey, which informed our evidence sessions and provided a basis on which to question the Government and local authorities.

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35. We also visited the Wester Hailes Education Centre in Edinburgh to discuss with pupils their vocational options and how the school was trying to get pupils ready for work. We held informal briefings with experts in the field, including Audit Scotland and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, head teachers, educational consultants and academics.



36. Our inquiry into the attainment of pupils with a sensory impairment received positive responses from a number of organisations. They welcomed our report and follow up work with the Scottish Government and also put forward some areas for further consideration on the topic.

37. Now that the Education (Scotland) Bill has been passed, the Scottish Government and local authorities will be expected to deliver improvements that narrow the attainment gap. This will continue to be a key policy issue and one our successor committee will no doubt wish to scrutinise. In particular, it will be important to clarify the exact means by which the Scottish Government intends to close the gap, and how local authorities are sharing best practice in this area.

38. Our successor committee may also wish to consider the responses received to our work on the attainment of pupils with a sensory impairment and consider whether it can further contribute to the issue.

Curriculum for Excellence – National Qualifications

39. Another key policy area in school education is the on-going implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. We followed this closely and scrutinised the preparation for, and first year's introduction of, the new National Qualifications (levels 4 and 5).
40. We used Facebook and Twitter to invite questions to put to the Scottish Government from those directly affected by the changes. This generated a lively discussion and became one of the Scottish Parliament's most successful Facebook posts, with a reach of more than 41,000 people. We put some of these questions to the Cabinet Secretary and produced a highlights video, posted on

Facebook and YouTube, showing the Cabinet Secretary responding to the questions from the public.

41. Amid concerns about a lack of available resources and mounting pressure on teachers' time as a result of the qualifications, we sought reassurances from the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the Government that pupils would not be disadvantaged.
42. Our evidence sessions on CfE and the National Qualifications helped to inform public understanding of its implementation, and ensure that relevant education bodies were held accountable for its delivery.

43. As well as monitoring the issues above, the successor committee could look at broader issues around Curriculum for Excellence than examinations. For example, the OECD recently reported and made a number of recommendations on Curriculum for Excellence². Further, there may be merit in looking at the wider impact of Curriculum for Excellence throughout all stages of education, i.e. pre-school, primary, secondary and colleges.

Further and higher education

College reform

44. The Scottish Government introduced a range of legislative and non-legislative reforms to the college sector. These included the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013, which introduced a regionalised college structure.
45. In early 2016, we held a one-off evidence session looking at the outcomes to date of the college reforms, focusing on how learners and employers have been affected by the reforms. The participants were generally positive about the reforms, although some groups did express concern. There was also a suggestion that some college regions may be progressing more quickly than others.
46. Given the scale of the changes and their recent implementation, our successor committee could continue to scrutinise the reforms' success and their impact on learners and employers. These groups were intended to be the main beneficiaries of reform.
47. A number of issues have arisen in 2015-16 concerning college governance. For example, the Scottish Government took the unprecedented step of removing the board of Glasgow Clyde College. In addition, the Public Audit Committee considered a number of concerns relating to governance at other colleges in Scotland. In order to learn from the mistakes and from best practice, the Scottish

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Government established a College Good Governance Task Group, which will report in March 2016.

48. Further work is clearly required in order to ensure proper governance structures are in place across the college sector. Due to timing issues, we were unable to examine the findings of the Task Group and suggest this could be a priority for the successor committee early in Session 5.

University governance

49. The Scottish Government introduced the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill with the aim of strengthening existing governance in the higher education sector in Scotland.
50. In our Stage 1 report we acknowledged the Bill had generated a considerable amount of comment and criticism, and welcomed the Cabinet Secretary's commitment to monitoring the Bill's impact in conjunction with the sector as a whole. We also noted the Cabinet Secretary's statement that the university sector advisory board could help to measure the Bill's success.

51. Our successor committee may wish to scrutinise, later in the session, the impact of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill on university governance, and whether the expected benefits have been delivered.

Culture and the arts

British Sign Language (BSL)

52. In 2014, Mark Griffin³ introduced the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill aiming to promote BSL and increase the opportunities for people to learn the language. It also aimed to support BSL users' linguistic rights to use their own language, and therefore had a cultural foundation.



53. We engaged with BSL users and the wider Deaf community throughout our scrutiny of the Bill. In doing so, we adopted some new and innovative methods of working. In many cases, it was the first time these groups had engaged with the Parliament.
54. We created a Facebook group to allow the BSL and Deaf community to offer views on the Bill by posting BSL video clips, produced key documents bilingually (in English and BSL), and provided live English/BSL interpretation of all evidence sessions and formal meetings. We also met BSL users, both young and old, to discuss their experiences of using BSL and to find out their views on the Bill.
55. The Facebook group, in particular, proved to be an effective engagement tool and the initiative was widely welcomed as an excellent example of a public body being inclusive and accessible for Deaf people. With the legislation now in force, the Scottish Government and its implementation partners have adopted the model we developed and use it for the on-going engagement with the Deaf BSL community under the Act.
56. We welcomed nearly 2,500 members to our BSL Facebook group who posted hundreds of comments and views about the BSL Bill. We also received over 100 BSL video submissions about the legislation.



57. An English/BSL interpreter told us about the impact our work had on BSL users and the wider Deaf community:

“I was overwhelmed at the response to how the Committee and Parliament engaged with the Deaf community on gaining their views and so pleased the Facebook page was successful... The Committee was also very responsive to meeting Deaf people and it has been interesting to see how they have changed over the course of this process and how supportive and championing some members have become on Deaf issues. I think the Deaf community has noted this and appreciated all the hard work, and I hope they continue to be as engaged in political matters.”

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58. The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 is in the process of being implemented and our successor committee could consider how this progresses during Session 5. In particular, the committee could consider the Scottish Government's activities in developing the BSL national plan⁴ for Scotland, followed by the plan itself.

Broadcasting and the BBC

59. We have considered various aspects of broadcasting policy in Scotland, including how effectively public service broadcasters in Scotland, in particular the BBC, are meeting their public service broadcasting obligations.
60. In 2015-16, we scrutinised the operation of the BBC in Scotland as part of the charter renewal process. This is a new function for the Scottish Parliament following upon a recommendation of the Smith Commission. A Memorandum of Understanding with Westminster and the BBC was signed formalising the BBC's accountability to the Scottish Parliament and, ultimately, people in Scotland.
61. In our report, we called for the BBC to do more to represent the diversity of Scottish culture and support the creative industries in Scotland. To achieve this, we called for greater decentralisation by the BBC of its decision making, commissioning and accompanying budgets.
62. Our report was endorsed by the Parliament and, together with the transcript of the plenary debate, formed the Parliament's contribution to the charter renewal process.

63. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, on behalf of the UK Government, is currently considering the responses to its consultation on the charter and will issue a draft charter in due course. The successor committee could follow on from where we have left off by scrutinising the draft charter when it becomes available.

Press regulation

64. Following exposure of phone hacking incidents, the Leveson inquiry proposed, in 2012, a new regulatory system for the UK press. In Scotland, an Expert Panel was established to consider the implications of the Leveson report for Scotland. We heard oral evidence on the various options for the regulation of the press in Scotland and concluded it was preferable to have a single system operating across the UK as a whole.
65. The Royal Charter on independent self-regulation of the press was agreed by the Scottish and UK Governments, and was unanimously passed at Holyrood and by all the major parties at Westminster. The Royal Charter puts in place a process to

implement the recommendations of the Leveson report. The Scottish Government has been engaging with UK Government counterparts to monitor progress of the implementation of the Royal Charter and will continue to engage with the Scottish press on independent self-regulation. This work is on-going and any further action will be based on progress made towards the implementation of the Royal Charter.

66. The successor committee could monitor developments on press regulation and undertake further scrutiny as it considers appropriate.

Financial scrutiny

67. Throughout the session we have developed a joined-up approach to financial scrutiny by linking the budget process to our wider work programme, rather than treating this as a standalone annual event. We set out relevant examples below.

School spending

68. We looked in detail at school spending across two budget periods, for 2015-16 and 2016-17. Our work built on a well-received report by Audit Scotland on school education⁵ and was the first time any education committee had looked at school budgets in detail.
69. We involved parents groups, youth groups and unions in our work, along with local authorities as the bodies responsible for making spending decisions. We conducted a two-stage consultation process with local authorities about their spending plans. We followed this with an informal discussion event in the Parliament involving over 50 directors of education and finance from local authorities across Scotland.
70. We combined this scrutiny with our broader work on the educational attainment gap, and discussed the key areas of concern with local authorities and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning in a formal session.

Further and higher education spending

71. Spending on further and higher education was the focus of our budget scrutiny for 2012-13 and 2013-14.
72. This work also informed our scrutiny of the 2014-15 budget, when we looked at how providers of training and learning, including the further education sector, were helping to deliver the Scottish Government's youth employability commitments.
73. Later in 2015, we followed up these discussions with a one-off evidence session on the range of financial and other support available to students.

Public bodies – delivering added value

74. In 2015-16, we held a series of one-off scrutiny sessions with five key public bodies that operate within our remit: Creative Scotland, Education Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Qualifications Authority, and Skills Development Scotland.
75. Together, these five bodies are responsible for a substantial amount of public funding, totalling almost £2bn. We scrutinised each body's spending decisions and outcomes, and held them to account for their contribution to the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework. The evidence sessions raised a number of issues that we subsequently followed up with the relevant cabinet secretaries. This information provides a useful starting point on which to measure the future priorities and performance of these bodies.

76. We have found it helpful to build budget scrutiny into our other work, as appropriate, and suggest the new committee may wish to continue this approach.
77. Further, we recommend that our successor committee continues to scrutinise the five public bodies during Session 5. These bodies are responsible for spending a large amount of public money and should be held to account for their activities.
78. In addition, our successor committee may wish to consider undertaking similar scrutiny sessions with other public bodies in its remit, such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Children's Hearings Scotland and the recently established Historic Environment Scotland.

Other possible work

79. As demonstrated throughout this report, we have scrutinised most of the main topics within our remit during this session. There are some specific issues we have not examined in depth due to time constraints and we therefore highlight these to our successor committee for possible consideration:
 - alternative models of education provision, for example, Newlands Junior College in Glasgow;
 - the extent to which the third sector is helping to deliver the Scottish Government's and local authorities' educational priorities;
 - the impact, on all school pupils, of schools' efforts to reduce exclusions;
 - the impact of equalities legislation on the provision of school education and on pupils' experiences of school;

- community learning and development; and
- the continuing development of the BBC charter and, linked to this, how Creative Scotland is encouraging cultural development in Scotland.

Images that appear in our report

Page 3:

(Left) The Education and Culture Committee on a fact-finding visit to Windsor Park School and Sensory Service at Falkirk High School. 9 December 2014. The visit was in connection with the Committee's scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill.

(Right) The Education and Culture Committee on a fact-finding visit to Craigie High School Multi Sensory Service, which provides support services for pupils with hearing and visual impairments at Craigie High School, Dundee. 18 May 2015. The visit was in connection with the Committee's inquiry into the attainment of pupils with a sensory impairment.

Page 4:

Young people with experience of being in care and Who Cares? Scotland give evidence to the Education and Culture Committee. 5 August 2014. The evidence session followed up the Committee's two inquiries into children in care.

Page 5:

(Left) The Education and Culture Committee on a fact-finding visit to People First Parents Group, Edinburgh. 20 November 2012. The visit was in connection with the Committee's inquiry into decision making on whether to take children into care.

(Centre) Young care leavers from the Ribble Theatre Company perform a short play based on their experiences of being in care, at the Scottish Parliament. 17 June 2013. The event took place as part of the Committee's inquiry into decision making on whether to take children into care.

(Right) The Education and Culture Committee on a fact-finding visit to meet with foster carers at Barnardo's Scotland Fostering Service to launch the Committee's inquiry into decision making on whether to take children into care. 26 June 2012.

Page 6:

Young care leavers and Who Cares? Scotland thank the Education and Culture Committee for its inquiry work on children in care and scrutiny of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. 14 January 2014.

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(Both) The Education and Culture Committee on a fact-finding visit to Wester Hailes Education Centre, Edinburgh. 3 March 2015. The visit was in connection with the Committee's inquiry into the educational attainment gap and, specifically, to speak with students and gather information for a formal evidence session on the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

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(Both) The Education and Culture Committee on a fact-finding visit to Deaf Action Headquarters, in Edinburgh. 20 January 2015. The visit was in connection with the Committee's scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill.

¹ Our annual reports are available on our website, under the sections for reports published in each year: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/46956.aspx>

² OECD, *Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective* (2015). Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/Improving-Schools-in-Scotland-An-OECD-Perspective.pdf>

³ Mark Griffin subsequently became a member of the Committee in 2015.

⁴ The Act requires the first BSL National Plan to be published within two years of the Act coming into force, i.e. before 23 October 2017.

⁵ Audit Scotland, *School education* (2014). Available at: http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2014/nr_140619_school_education.pdf



EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

1st Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), 15 June 2016

Work Programme

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to set out options for the Committee's work programme for meetings up to summer recess. The Committee will also be asked to agree in principle to holding a business planning day during summer recess in late August 2016.

Business planning

2. It is normal practice for committees to periodically hold business planning days to discuss working practices and to discuss longer term work planning. This is especially useful shortly after a new committee has been established.
3. The purpose of the business planning day would be: to agree working practices; to agree the overall strategy and goals of the Committee; and to discuss the Committees' work programme for the period after the summer recess (e.g. approach to the scrutiny of the budget). **The Committee is invited to agree in principle that it will hold a business planning day in late August 2016.**
4. Should the Committee agree to holding a business planning day, the clerks will establish members' availability during late August 2016 and, before the summer recess, the Committee will be invited to agree a date and venue.

Committee meetings

5. It is anticipated that the Committee will meet weekly. There would normally be time for two meetings before the summer recess. However, the Parliamentary Business Bureau has not scheduled any Chamber business for the week commencing 20 June 2016; nonetheless a committee may choose to meet during that week members felt that was necessary.
6. A single meeting prior to summer recess on Wednesday 29 June 2016 would perhaps not lend itself to a start to a substantive piece of work, such as an inquiry. However, it would be an opportunity for the Committee to undertake a one-off evidence session.
7. The Committee could, for example, choose to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to appear before the Committee and discuss his priorities and plans for the current parliamentary session. This would give the Committee an opportunity to question the Cabinet Secretary on the Scottish Government's objectives and may inform the Committee's longer term work programme.

8. In addition, during her statement on 25 May 2016 the First Minister said:

“Before the summer holidays, John Swinney will publish a draft delivery plan setting out more of the detail, timescales and next steps of our plans to close the attainment gap.”¹

An evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary may allow the Committee to scrutinise the draft delivery plan or to seek an update on the plan.

9. **The Committee is invited to agree to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to give evidence at its meeting on Wednesday 29 June 2016.**

Clerk to the Committee
10 June 2016

¹ Official Report, 25 May 2016, Col. 4. Available at:
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10452&mode=pdf>