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## **EDUCATION IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

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### **PREAMBLE**

This paper follows on from the previous bulletin (Redford, 2016), which covered the education remit of the Parliament's Education and Skills Committee between February and August 2016. The following bulletin covers the Education remit of the Education and Skills Committee from September 2016 to January 2017.

### **SEPTEMBER 2016 – JANUARY 2017**

The Education and Skills Committee had the following members during this period:

James Dornan (Convener), Johann Lamont (Deputy Convener), Colin Beattie, Ross Greer, Daniel Johnson, Richard Lochhead, Fulton MacGregor, Gillian Martin, Tavish Scott, Liz Smith and Ross Thomson. Full records of the Committee meetings, including minutes, official papers and transcripts of proceedings can be found on the Scottish Parliament website at:

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/99746.aspx>

In this period the committee held a series of overview meetings to collect evidence on: Further and Higher Education, Attainment, Children's Services, Curriculum for Excellence and Early Years. They then met with the Cabinet Secretary to debate the issues raised in the panels. The committee worked with this information in a series of private sessions at the end of each meeting when they discussed their work plan for the year. They concluded this work at their meeting on 2 November 2016 when they agreed to:

- monitor the impact of college mergers on an ongoing basis;
- undertake pre-legislative scrutiny on any bill stemming from the Scottish Government Governance Review, and to seek a draft bill from the Government to inform this scrutiny;
- hold a session on local government delivery of Scottish Government policies;
- write to the Cabinet Secretary in relation to his commitment to undertake further scrutiny on Additional Support Needs; and
- in relation to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, arrange a meeting involving survivor groups, the Convener and Deputy Convener, to be held after the next meeting between the Cabinet Secretary and survivors has taken place (ES/S5/16/9/M).

They reviewed these actions in December when they agreed to take further work on the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, Personal and Social Education, Additional Support Needs and Children’s hearings. The committee also heard an update on named persons, took evidence to inform their pre-budget scrutiny, considered the proposed UK Higher Education and Research Bill, heard evidence about the Enterprise and Skills Review and approved a number of subordinate orders.

## OVERVIEW OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The committee took evidence from witnesses at their meeting on 7 September 2017. The supporting papers for this meeting included notes of visits made by committee members and written submissions from College Scotland, Universities Scotland, NUS Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (ES/S5/16/3/1).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
7 September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shona Struthers, <i>Colleges Scotland</i></li> <li>• Professor Andrea Nolan, <i>Universities Scotland</i></li> <li>• Vonnie Sandlan, <i>National Union of Students Scotland</i></li> <li>• John Kemp, <i>Scottish Funding Council</i></li> </ul>

The meeting opened with an explanation from Andrea Nolan about a new widening access recruitment plan. This was particularly welcomed by Shona Struthers who said that the college sector was looking to develop learner pathways into higher education. The meeting briefly considered the role of outcome agreements in monitoring the success of widening access before Johann Lamont asked about access to University for all Scottish students. In reply John Kemp acknowledged, ‘that demand has grown more than supply’ (Kemp, 07.09.16 Col 8). The meeting then discussed the use of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as a measure of deprivation in rural areas. Tavish Scott followed this with a question about connections between widening access and developing the young workforce. In reply John Kemp talked about improving the learner journey and Andrea Nolan said:

. . . what we are about in terms of developing the young workforce is being totally aligned with our access agenda, which is about equality of opportunity so that people have opportunities and are not in some way negated by where they have come from. (Nolan, 07.09.16 Col 14).

Colin Beattie then asked a series of questions about college governance and the intention, ‘of putting learners at the heart of colleges’ (Beattie, 07.09.16 Col 18). Shona Struthers assured him that students now sat on boards and that there was now a student association framework that supported student representation in all colleges. The meeting concluded with a discussion about funding for further and higher education and the impact on both sectors of withdrawal from the European Union.

## OVERVIEW OF ATTAINMENT

The committee took evidence from witnesses at their meeting on 14 September 2017. The supporting papers for this meeting included a note of a meeting the committee held with teachers, parents, pupils and stakeholders in Stirling (ES/S5/16/4/4) and a SPICe briefing on attainment (ES/S5/16/4/5).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paul Clancy, <i>Dundee City Council</i></li><li>• Lindsay Law, <i>Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC)</i></li><li>• Graeme Logan, <i>Education Scotland</i></li><li>• Jamie Petrie, <i>Broomhouse Primary School</i></li></ul>

The Convener welcomed everyone to the panel and asked each witness to make an opening statement about attainment. Lindsay Law spoke of the opposition of the SPTC to collecting national attainment data. Graeme Logan referred to the importance of the governance review, James Petrie, the importance of focusing on positive destinations for each young person and Paul Clancy on the involvement of parents in school communities. Daniel Johnson then asked about the resources required to raise attainment. In reply the panel gave examples of different resources being used to support children and their parents. Colin Beattie followed this with a question about the targets used to assess progress. Graeme Logan responded with information about achievement in literacy and numeracy at different levels of the curriculum. James Petrie then described working with children’s achievement, rather than attainment, in primary schools. Tavish Scott asked how the focus on achievement connected to the proposal to use tests in primary schools. In reply James Petrie referred to current standardised tests that predated Curriculum for Excellence and his wish:

That the national tests will be entirely based on the curriculum for excellence experiences and outcomes, as teachers, we will be tasked not only with delivering the experiences and outcomes in our own creative way, but with tracking whether the children have achieved them at the end of the early level, the first level or the second level (Petrie, 14.09.16 Col 36).

Paul Clancy added to this the need to have, ‘the right measures at the right time’ (Clancy, 14.09.16 Col 39). The committee then returned to the issues of resources before concluding with questions about the distribution of funding for the attainment challenge. In reply Graeme Logan said different data sets were being considered, including free school meal entitlement. The Convener closed the session by asking, ‘Is the attainment Scotland fund about recognising that and trying to put in the extra resources to level the playing field at an early stage?’ (Dornan, 14.09.16 Col 56). Graeme Logan replied, ‘Yes—there is now a £750 million programme over five years to do that’ (Logan, 14.09.16 Col 58).

## OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN’S SERVICES

The committee took evidence on Children’s Services at their meeting on the 21 September 2016. Each organisation represented on the panel submitted

supporting statements (ES/S5/16/5/1). The committee also had papers from the meetings they had held with a range of stakeholders in Stirling on the 31 August 2016 (ES/S5/16/5/2). They reviewed the evidence in private at the end of the meeting.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
21 September 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mike Burns, <i>Social Work Scotland</i></li> <li>• Duncan Dunlop, <i>Who Cares? Scotland</i></li> <li>• Mary Glasgow, <i>Children 1<sup>st</sup></i></li> <li>• Malcolm Schaffer, <i>Scottish Children's Reporter Administration</i></li> </ul>

The Convener opened this session by asking how each organisation was helping to close the attainment gap. In reply Malcolm Schaffer described the way in which Children's Panels worked with children who were not attaining because of home circumstances. Mary Glasgow then outlined the role of Children 1<sup>st</sup> in offering support to families:

Professionals, politicians and other people often describe those children through the lens of one issue that they are affected by but, in our experience, the children whom we support and who struggle in school are the same children who are affected by neglect, poverty and domestic violence. It is really important that those children are viewed through a lens that not only relates to attainment but enables us to see their whole lives as part of families and communities that face disadvantage (Glasgow, 21.09.16 Col 5).

Duncan Dunlop described the way that Who Cares? Scotland worked to connect those with experience of care, 'we help them to connect together and to find their voice and identity' (Duncan, 21.09.16 Col 6). Mike Burns said that social workers worked closely with education staff and described how they focused on a range of outcomes, including attainment. The meeting then spent time discussing different care situations, the need for the wider community to understand care and changes GIRFEC had brought to joint practice.

## **OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE**

The committee took evidence on Curriculum for Excellence at their meeting on 28 September 2016. The papers for this meeting included supporting statements from each of the organisations attending, a letter from the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, notes of an evidence session held by committee members in Stirling (ES/S5/16/6/1) and a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/16/6/2). The committee returned to the curriculum at their meeting on 18 January 2017 when they took evidence on responsibility and accountability. The supporting papers for this meeting were a SPICe paper (ES/S5/17/2/2) and written submissions from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland, the SQA and EIS (ES/S5/17/2/3).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
28 September 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keir Bloomer, <i>Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)</i></li> <li>• Dr. Janet Brown, <i>Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)</i></li> <li>• Ann Grant, <i>Shawlands Academy</i></li> <li>• Susan Quinn, <i>Educational Institute of Scotland</i></li> </ul>
18 January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiona Robertson, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> <li>• Dr. Janet Brown, <i>Scottish Qualifications Authority</i></li> <li>• Dr. Bill Maxwell, <i>Education Scotland</i></li> <li>• Terry Lanagan, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)</i></li> <li>• Larry Flanagan, <i>Education Institute of Scotland</i></li> <li>• Seamus Searson, <i>Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association</i></li> <li>• Joanna Murphy, <i>National Parent Forum of Scotland</i></li> </ul>

The Convener began this session by asking the witnesses if the original intentions of Curriculum for Excellence had been met. Susan Quinn said that some had been met but that some aspects had not been, for example the expectation of using teacher’s professional judgement to record attainment. Ann Grant welcomed the curriculum because it ran from the ages of three to 18. Janet Brown talked of the challenge of change and the removal of unit assessments. Keir Bloomer said that there was a need for independent research and evaluation of the curriculum. The meeting then discussed the range and source of materials directing the curriculum and the national focus on teacher professionalism. Susan Quinn used information about experiences and outcomes to illustrate her point, ‘that there is a bit too much information from everybody. There are lots of different things in lots of different places, and consistency is an issue’ (Quinn, 28.09.16 Col 9). Daniel Johnson then asked about the curriculum binders he was shown when visiting schools. Ann Grant replied:

It is not really a case of a teacher sitting with a green binder and ticking things off or reading through the contents in isolation. Those days have gone—if they ever really existed. It really is now a case of people working together collegiately, looking at information online, sharing good practice and learning from one another, in order to meet needs (Grant, 28.09.16 Col 11).

Colin Beattie asked about curriculum guidance. In response Janet Brown talked about the difficulties of balancing support and guidance to ensure it arrived when it was needed. Keir Bloomer argued that there was a need to understand the nature of change in the curriculum over time and balance the amount of advice. This meeting then discussed the development of bureaucracy around the curriculum and the introduction of benchmarks. The session ended with a discussion about the removal of unit assessments by the SQA.

The meeting on the 18 January began with a statement from Fiona Robertson about the management structures of the curriculum. Tavish Scott followed this with a number of detailed questions about the relationship between

the implementation group and the management board. Liz Smith then asked about the amount of guidance issued to teachers and the decision to reduce it. Fiona Robertson replied that consultation with the professional associations had informed advice to ministers. Larry Flanagan added that, ‘almost all the attempts to alleviate workload pressures have come about as a consequence of direct interaction with the Scottish Government’ (Flanagan, 18.01.17 Col 10). He then went on to outline the challenges teachers had faced in accessing material published on a website:

Most of the problems that we have around the qualifications came about because of schools’ lack of time to engage with the headline decisions. That has been the source of a great number of the difficulties that the board and schools have faced over the past few years (Flanagan, 18.01.17 Col12).

The meeting concluded with a discussion about the structure of the curriculum in secondary schools and the three-year structure of the senior phase.

## OVERVIEW OF EARLY YEARS

The committee took evidence on Early Years at their meeting on 5 October 2016. The papers for this meeting included written submissions from each of the organisations attending, a paper from Save the Children and notes of an evidence session held by committee members in Stirling (ES/S5/16/7/3) and a SPiCe briefing (ES/S5/16/7/4).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
5 October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Stephanie Primrose, COSLA</li> <li>• Claire Schofield, <i>National Day Nurseries Association</i></li> <li>• Maggie Simpson, <i>Scottish Childminding Association</i></li> </ul>

The session opened with a question from the Convener to COSLA about spending on early years. In reply Stephanie Primrose said that COSLA would continue to monitor spending and was supportive of the work being done in early years. Liz Smith asked the panel about the proposal to introduce a ‘child account’ where funding would follow the child. Claire Schofield replied that such an approach would appeal to parents and providers. Stephanie Primrose said it would be an issue for childminders as many authorities did not use them for funded hours. This led to a discussion about the way families used the hours available for each child. Richard Lochhead asked about the need to attract 18,000 extra practitioners into the workforce. Stephanie Primrose replied, ‘we need to make this a profession that young people and indeed older people, including women returning to work, want to come into’ (Primrose, 05.10.16 Col 26). Tavish Scott reminded the meeting that this growth in the workforce needed to be in place in three and a half years, ‘every parent in this room and every parent in Scotland will be expecting 1,140 hours’ (Scott, 05.10.16 Col 27). The meeting then discussed the challenges faced by councils in developing the workforce.

## OVERVIEW SESSIONS

The committee took evidence on issues raised in its overview sessions with John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills at their meeting on 2 November 2016. The committee papers for this meeting were a summary paper of all the overview sessions (ES/5/16/9/2) and a SPICe briefing paper on School Governance (ES/S5/16/9/3).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
2 November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Swinney, <i>Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Scottish Government</i></li> <li>• Aileen McKechnie and Fiona Robertson, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The Cabinet Secretary made an opening statement to the committee where he described education, as ‘the Government’s defining mission’ (Swinney, 02.11.16 Col 2). He then identified three key policies that supported the delivery of education as a priority: getting it right for every child, curriculum for excellence and developing the young workforce. The questions began with higher education and the Convener asked the Cabinet Secretary about the impact of Brexit. In reply John Swinney outlined the work the Government had done to address sector concerns about students, research and academic staff. Liz Smith asked a series of questions about the Government’s commitment to free tuition. In his replies the Cabinet Secretary acknowledged differences of political philosophy with Liz Smith and concluded:

The proportion of Scotland-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants to Scottish universities has been rising since the Government came to office, during which time we have had the policy of free access to higher education (Swinney, 02.11.16 Col 7).

The meeting then discussed possible outcomes for University staff who were EU citizens, before moving on to a question on college places from Johann Lamont. In reply John Swinney quoted overall full time equivalent student numbers which had risen from 116,399 in 2012-13 to 119, 078 in 2014-15. He agreed with Johann Lamont about the role of colleges in offering positive destinations for you people and said that he would be investigating the drop-out rate from college courses. Liz Smith opened the questions on attainment and curriculum for excellence by asking about quality assurance systems in the SQA. The Cabinet Secretary replied that he intended, ‘to make sure that quality assurance is at the heart of the SQA’s approach’ (Swinney, 02.1.16 Col 19). Ross Greer asked about additional support needs and Tavish Scott about recent changes to the Curriculum. This led to a discussion about parental involvement in education and John Swinney acknowledged, that ‘parental involved in education is central to ensuring the strength and effectiveness of our education system’ (Swinney, 02.11.16 Col 26). The session then considered the Governance Review and committee members asked about the proposal to create educational regions and the possible impact of that on schools and education authorities. In reply John Swinney said that the idea



for educational regions came from the OECD (2015), ‘the need for us to ensure that there is much more collaboration in educational practice and enhancement in the years to come’ (Swinney, 02.11.16, Col 30). The meeting concluded with a discussion about the need to expand the early years workforce.

## UPDATE ON NAMED PERSONS

The committee took evidence from John Swinney at their meeting on 14 September 2016. The supporting papers for this meeting included a Ministerial Statement on named persons and a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/16/4/3).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
14 September 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Swinney, <i>Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The Convener began by asking the Cabinet Secretary about the experience that Highland Council had with a similar scheme. In reply John Swinney said that as elsewhere there was a debate about the scheme, but

the number of referrals to the children’s reporter in Highland dropped from 2,335 in 2007 to 744 - a drop of 68 per cent, which is a quite remarkable reduction in the number of referrals. I attribute that to the better alignment and connection of public services that is driven by the named person policy context. Highland has been a pioneer in that respect (Swinney, 14.09.17 Col 5).

Liz Smith then asked a series of questions about the Supreme Court Judgement and the definition of wellbeing, concluding:

Because this is a universal policy, which covers every child, and because the threshold is so low and the paperwork and the assessment, which is based on the SHANARRI indicators and all the accompanying guidance, are so substantial, the expectation is that casework will increase. How will you address that, especially as you have given a commitment in Parliament to reduce teachers’ workloads? (Smith, 14.09.16 Col 9).

In reply John Swinney said that it was important to plan for support, ‘but I do not see the necessity for a cottage industry of bureaucracy to be created around that’ (Swinney, 14.09.16 Col 9). This led committee members to ask about the way that the consultation would be led and possible changes to law from the consultation exercise.

## PRE - BUDGET SCRUTINY

The committee agreed their approach to budget scrutiny in private at their meeting on 7 September 2017. They reviewed this in private at their meeting on 21 September 2016 and held their first session of evidence on the 9 November 2016. The papers for this meeting included a submission from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) (ES/S5/16/10/A) and two SPICe briefing papers (ES/S5/16/10/2). The committee discussed the evidence in private at the end of their meeting on the 9 November and agreed to write to SDS with some supplementary questions.

They heard further evidence at their next meeting on the 16 November 2016. The papers for this meeting included a SPICe briefing paper on the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) (ES/S5/16/11/3). After the panel the committee met in private and agreed to write to the SFC and the Auditor General for Scotland on issues raised in evidence. The committee took evidence from the SQA at their meeting on the 23 November 2016. The papers for this meeting included a written submission from the SQA and a SPICe briefing on the role of the SQA (ES/S5/16/12/1). Education Scotland provided the final group of witnesses at the committee meeting on the 30 November 2016. The papers for this meeting were a submission from Education Scotland and a SPICe briefing paper on the role of the organisation (ES/S5/16/13/2). The committee discussed the evidence in private on the 30 November 2016 and agreed to seek a committee debate in the Chamber on their pre-budget scrutiny. The committee ended their work on the budget with evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills at their meeting on 21 December 2016. This meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/16/16/1) which summarised the evidence from the earlier panels. The committee discussed and agreed a draft report for the Finance and Constitution committee at their meeting on 11 January 2017. At the same meeting they agreed for publication a report on the Performance and Role of Key Education and Skills bodies.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
9 November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damien Yeates, Danny Logue, Gordon McGuinness and Katie Hutton, <i>Skills Development Scotland</i></li> </ul>
16 November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. John Kemp, Dr. Stuart Fancey and Lorna MacDonald, <i>Scottish Funding Council (SFC)</i></li> </ul>
23 November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Janet Brown and Linda Ellison, <i>Scottish Qualifications Authority</i></li> </ul>
30 November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Bill Maxwell, Alastair Delaney, and Graeme Logan, <i>Education Scotland</i></li> </ul>
21 December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Swinney, <i>Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Scottish Government</i></li> <li>• Olivia MacLeod &amp; Aileen McKechnie, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The first evidence session began with a statement from Danny Logue about the structure of Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce, ‘a whole-school offer that starts in primary 7 and secondary 1’ (Logue, 09.11.16 Col 2). The meeting discussed the apprenticeship structure in detail and the outcome routes for those completing apprenticeships.

The second session considered the relationship between the SFC and the Government, and the ways in which the SFC advised the Government. Questions

from Johann Lamont and Tavish Scott focused on college funding and changes to college governance. This led to a discussion about student retention and the funding model used for colleges.

The third session of evidence began with a statement from Janet Brown about the role and responsibilities of the SQA. The questions from the committee focused on the relationship between the SQA and teachers and the way that the SQA communicated with parents. Committee members were particularly concerned that in their information sessions with teachers the message they heard was, 'the SQA is something that is done to them and something they do not have a real say in' (MacGregor 23.11.16 Col12). In response Janet Brown said that the SQA had teacher members on its board, and advisory council. The session ended with a discussion about communication and the cost of the service to schools and local authorities.

The Convener opened the fourth session of evidence by asking about the working relationship between Education Scotland and the SQA. In reply Bill Maxwell said that there were close relationships at each level of the organisation. This led to questions about communication and difficulties reported by teachers in accessing material on the Education website. Liz Smith then asked for information about other countries that had the education inspectorate and curriculum development in the same corporate body. Bill Maxwell replied that the models varied and gave the structures in Norway as an example of a similar approach. Johann Lamont asked about the independence of Education Scotland and the advice to ministers. Bill Maxwell agreed with her outline and said, 'We provide professional advice that is based on front-line information' (Maxwell, 30.11.16 Col 11). Graeme Logan followed this with an example of the way in which inspection evidence led to a change in assessment materials and guidance. This led to a discussion about the role of Education Scotland as a member of the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board. The committee then asked for information about the data collected by Education Scotland that provided evidence of the impact of Curriculum for Excellence. In reply Bill Maxwell talked about evidence from inspection and SQA results. The meeting then discussed changes to the school inspection process and concluded with a series of questions about subject options in the senior phase of the curriculum.

The final session of evidence began with a question from the Convener about lines of accountability between public bodies. In reply John Swinney acknowledged that there were, 'multiple layers of accountability in education' (Swinney, 21.12.16 Col 5) and emphasised the importance of the child at the centre of the system. Ross Thomson and Daniel Johnstone asked a series of questions about quality assurance systems in the SQA, Richard Lochhead about funding for rural schools and Tavish Scott the resource implications for new developments in education. The meeting then moved on to discuss allocations to Higher Education and the proposed changes to the board of the Scottish Funding Council. John Swinney reassured the committee that:

the funding council in its executive function will remain; we are talking about changes to board governance to provide greater alignment and cohesion of policy. The functions would still be exercised by the executive arm of the funding council (Swinney, 21.12.16 Col 25).

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH BILL (UK PARLIAMENT LEGISLATION)

The Committee considered the legislative consent memorandum lodged by John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (LCM (S5) 4), in private, at their meeting on the 28 September 2016. They discussed the legislation in private, at their meeting on the 26 October 2016 and agreed to organisations who had sent a written submission to give oral evidence at a future meeting. They took evidence on the proposed legislation at their meeting on the 16 November 2016. The papers for that meeting included submissions from the four organisations attending the panel (ES/S5/16/11/1). The committee discussed the evidence in private at the end of their meeting on the 16 November 2016 and agreed to write to the House of Lords and the Home Office highlighting concerns raised. The committee discussed a draft report in private, at their meeting on the 30 November 2016 and agreed the report for publication.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
16 November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Lesley Yellowlees, <i>The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)</i></li> <li>• Mary Senior, <i>University and College Union Scotland (UCU)</i></li> <li>• Alastair Sim, <i>Universities Scotland</i></li> <li>• Philip Whyte, <i>National Union of Students Scotland (NUS)</i></li> </ul>

The Convener opened the meeting by asking each witness to make a statement about their position on the bill. Mary Senior spoke first and outlined the opposition of UCU to the bill because of the introduction of the teaching excellence framework. Alastair Sim agreed with Mary Senior and said that the inclusion of the teaching excellence framework had left institutions with a difficult choice about whether to participate or not. He noted:

We already have in Scotland our enhancement-led institutional review process, which puts students at the centre and is driven by peer review and improvement, rather than being an audit-driven process. We value that and wish to retain it across the sector. It works well, and it has driven student-centred improvement (Sim, 16.11.16 Col 4).

He concluded that Universities Scotland was trying to get more influence on the teaching excellence framework and considering ways to enhance what Scottish Universities offered to the rest of the UK and international markets. This approach was supported by Lesley Yellowlees who added that the RSE wanted to see the institutional review process retained and recognition that the Scottish Education system was different. This was supported by Philip Whyte, who said that it was key to retain the institutional led review process. The witnesses agreed that it would be helpful if the committee wrote to the House of Lords to highlight their joint concerns about the teaching excellence framework. The meeting then moved on to discuss the proposed UK structures for research and the need for what

Alistair Sim described as a ‘firewall’ ‘between the UK-wide functions of UKRI and the England-only functions of UKRI’ (Sim, 16.11.16, Col 12).

## ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS REVIEW

The committee took evidence and enterprise and skills at their meeting on 7 December 2016. The focus of the review was to inform the future of Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council. Committee members were provided with a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/16/14/2) to support their discussion. NUS Scotland, UCU Scotland and Universities Scotland submitted a joint paper to committee on this subject (ES/S5/16/14/ Meeting Papers).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
7 December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keith Brown, <i>Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, Scottish Government</i></li> <li>• Hugh McAloon and Paul Smart, <i>Scottish Government</i></li> </ul>

The meeting began with opening remarks from Keith Brown in which he welcomed the opportunity to speak to the committee about the impact of the review on SDS and the SFC. He noted the concerns of stakeholders about the creation of a single board for both bodies and stressed that the Government, ‘recognise(d) the integrity of the universities’ academic freedom, and I emphasise that it will be protected’ (Brown, 07.12.16 Col 2). The Convener then asked for information about the second phase of the review. In reply Keith Brown noted work on governance and regionalisation and Paul Smart added that they were looking, ‘at aligning the functions of learning and skills agencies, principally the Scottish funding council and SDS’ (Smart, 07.12.16 Col 3). In particular:

We are looking thoroughly at the learner journey for 15 to 24-year-olds through the education and skills development systems, and reviewing the effectiveness of investment in that, which is fundamental. During phase 1, evidence suggested that we needed to be much more effective at measuring the impact and outcomes of our interventions (Smart, 07.12.16 Col 4).

The committee asked the panel about the evidence that suggested that one over-arching board was needed. Liz Smith followed this with a direct question:

If you abolish the current funding council board, in effect you abolish the funding council, because they are one and the same thing. Is that what you intend to do? (Smith, 07.12.16 Col 10).

In response Keith Brown said, ‘there is still an open question as to what form of governance structure should apply to the funding council and, in particular to the universities’ (Brown, 07.12.16 Col 12). Committee members spent some time asking where the recommendation to move to one over-arching board had come from. The Cabinet Secretary replied to all the questions that the consultation had been published and phase 2 would recommend a governance structure.

## ROLE OF EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

The committee took evidence on the role of Education Authorities at their meeting on 14 December 2016. The papers to support the meeting included a paper by the Committee Clerk (ES/S5/16/15/1) which collated all relevant submissions and a SPICe briefing paper on Local Government Delivery of School and Early Learning and Childcare (ES/S5/16/15/2).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
14 December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Councillor Stephanie Primrose and Jane O'Donnell, COSLA</li><li>• Councillor Jacqueline Henry and Peter Macleod, <i>Scottish Local Government Partnership</i></li></ul>

The meeting began with a detailed discussion of the way in which early years funding had been used by local authorities to expand early years provision in staffing and new buildings. Committee members asked questions about teacher shortages, the role of headteachers and closing the attainment gap. The session ended with a discussion about provision for children and young people with additional support needs.

## CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY

The committee took evidence at their meeting on 21 December 2016 on the Government's role in relation to the Scottish Child Abuse Enquiry.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
14 December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• John Swinney, <i>Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Scottish Government</i></li></ul>

The Convener opened the session by suggesting to the Cabinet Secretary that a reference group of survivors could support 'understanding of the inquiry's work among survivor groups' (Doran, 21.12.16 Col 33). John Swinney replied he could not express an opinion about what the inquiry should do. The Convener and Johann Lamont then asked about redress for survivors. John Swinney replied that the Government was working with the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) at the University of Strathclyde to work through that and other issues with the various survivor groups. Johann Lamont then asked if the inquiry could make a statement of progress and John Swinney referred to the responsibilities of the chair of the inquiry and that as Cabinet Secretary he could not express an opinion on the matter.

## COMMISSIONER FOR FAIR ACCESS

The committee met with the Commissioner for Fair Access, Dame Ruth Silver at their meeting on 25 January 2017. At that meeting they heard evidence from

members of the Commission on Widening Access. The supporting papers for this meeting included a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/17/3/1), reports from the Commission and submissions from members of the commission not attending the evidence session.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
25 January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dame Ruth Silver, Maureen McKenna and Professor Petra Wend, <i>Commission on Widening Access</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Peter Scott, <i>Commissioner for Fair Access</i></li> </ul>

In her opening statement to the committee Ruth Silver said the conclusion from the work of the commission was that, ‘Scotland actually knows how to do this very well; however, things are at a difficult developmental stage’ (Silvers, 25.01.17 Col 2).

The strategic shift that Scotland needs to make is clear to me. It is from individual passions to institutional change. It is from institutions to a system in which they work together, with place as the focus of that. People working together and institutions working together are better at getting lots of bang for bucks (Silver, 25.01.17 Col 5).

The committee asked questions about the range and use of data, the use of the Scottish Index on Multiple Deprivation, contextualised admissions and articulation routes for students between college and university. They then heard evidence from the Commissioner for Fair Access, Peter Scott. The committee discussed the role of the Commissioner with Peter Scott and what fair access was understood to mean.

## EUROPEAN REPORTER

The committee appointed Gillian Martin as their European Reporter at their meeting on 30 November 2016.

## SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

The committee took evidence on the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 4 and Part 5 Complaints) Revocation Order 2016 [draft] from John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills at their meeting September 2016 and agreed the following draft order:

S5M-01327—Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 4 and Part 5 Complaints) Revocation Order 2016 [draft]

The committee took evidence on the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (Time for Compliance) Regulations 2016 [Draft] from Joe Fitzpatrick, Minister for Parliamentary Business at their meeting on 5 October 2016 and agreed the following draft order:

S5M-01751 - Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (Time for Compliance) Regulations 2016 [draft]

The committee considered and made no recommendations in relation to the following instruments during this period:

- Named Persons (Training, Qualifications, Experience and Position) and the Child's Plan (Scotland) Revocation Order 2016 (SSI 2016/234)
- Children's Services Planning (Specified Date) (Scotland) Order 2016 (SSI 2016/255)
- Education (Student Loans) (Scotland) amendment Regulations 2016 (SSI 2016/261)
- Education (Student Loans) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016 (SSI 2016/261)
- Additional Support for Learning (Sources of Information) (Scotland) Order 2016 (SSI 2016/299)
- Scottish Ministers Annual Plan Planning Period (Scotland) Regulations 2016 (SSI 2016/373)
- Gaelic Medium Education (Assessment Requests) (Scotland) Regulations 2016 (SSI 2016/425)

## REFERENCES

OECD (2015) *Improving Schools in Scotland: an OECD Perspective*. Paris OECD.

Redford, M. (2016) Education in the Scottish Parliament, *Scottish Educational Review* 48(2), 108-121.