EDUCATION CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

9TH Meeting, 2000 (Session 1)

Tuesday 7 March 2000

The Committee will meet at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 3, Committee Chambers, Edinburgh.

1. **Update on Committee business:** The Committee will be updated on business in its current work programme.

2. **Petition PE82 on Gaelic-medium education:** The Committee will consider Petition PE82 by Commann nam Parant (Naisseanta) which calls for Gaelic-medium education to be placed on a statutory basis.

3. **Consultation with children and young people:** The Committee will consider a report from Fiona McLeod on consultation with children and young people.

4. **Hampden Park:** The Committee will consider the latest position on the financial rescue package for the national stadium at Hampden Park.

5. **Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Bill:** The Committee will consider a further draft report on the Bill at Stage 1.

Gillian Baxendine

Clerk to the Committee

Room 2.7 Committee Chambers
Ext. 85204

Email: gillian.baxendine@scottish.parliament.uk
***************
The following papers are attached for this meeting—

Petition PE82 by Commann nam Parant (Naiseanta)

Note by the Clerk on Petition PE82 by Commann nam Parant (Naiseanta) (Agenda Item 2) ED/00/9/1

Report by Fiona McLeod on consultation with children and young people recirculated from Meeting 7 (Agenda Item 3) ED/00/7/4

Policy Briefing from Children in Scotland on developing consultation with children (Agenda Item 3) ED/00/9/2

Letter from Minister for Children & Education on financial rescue package for Hampden Park (Agenda Item 4) ED/00/9/3

The following papers are issued for information:-

Note by the Clerk on Petition PE 81 by Mr Frank Harvey, together with the Petition documents.
The Public Petitions Committee referred this petition to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 15 February 2000 and asked that it be included in its consideration of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Bill.

The Petition

2. The petitioner, Comman nam Parant (Naiseanta), is the national parental support organisation which acts as an umbrella group to represent the interests of parents who choose Gaelic-medium education (GME) for their children.

3. The petition calls for the Parliament to take steps to place GME on a statutory basis; asks that legislation be introduced which will place a duty on local authorities to provide for GME where reasonable demand exists; suggests that the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Bill be the legislative vehicle for this; and where Gaelic is desired by parents, GME is given parity of provision with education in English.

4. The Scottish Executive noted concerns expressed during its consultation on the draft Bill, and in its consultation response *Improving our Schools* said—

“The Bill provides for the first time a statutory framework for determining priorities and local objectives flowing from these priorities. Ministers believe that this new mechanism provides a powerful way to underscore the central importance of GME in helping secure the status of Gaelic. Ministers intend to use the new statutory framework to underpin the development of GME through the process of consultation on and setting of national priorities and local objectives.”

Options for further action

5. There are a number of options for the Committee:

- it can decide that it is not necessary to include specific provisions in the Bill, and respond to the petitioner in these terms;

- it can agree with the petitioner in principle and indicate support for an amendment at Stage 2 of the Bill;

- it seek more information from the Executive or the petitioner before making a decision.

If any individual Committee Member is intending to bring forward an amendment in this area, the Committee could also decide to note the petition at this stage and indicate that it will give the proposal detailed consideration at Stage 2.

Gillian Baxendine
Clerk to the Committee  2 March 2000
Memorandum
To: Gillian Baxendine, Clerk to the Education, Culture & Sport Committee
CC:
From: Steve Farrell, Clerk to Public Petitions Committee
Date: Friday, 18 February 2000

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE - TRANSFER OF PETITION TO EDUCATION, CULTURE & SPORT COMMITTEE

As you may be aware, the Public Petitions Committee (PPC) agreed at its meeting on Tuesday 15 February 2000 to transfer the following petition to the Education, Culture & Sport Committee for further consideration:

PE82 Petition by Comann nam Parant (Naiseanta) calling for the Scottish Parliament to take active steps to recognise the validity and educational benefits of Gaelic-medium education.

I attach a copy of the petition. I also attach for information a copy of the briefing note prepared for members of the PPC.

The PPC agreed that the petition should be passed to your Committee to be taken into account as part of its consideration of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Bill.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the petitioners to be notified of the date on which the petition is likely to be considered by your Committee.

As you may be aware, the Conveners' Liaison Group has agreed that subject Committees should let the Convener of the PPC have sight of their proposed responses to petitioners before they issue, as a courtesy to that Committee. I should be grateful therefore if you would, in due course, send me a copy of the draft response to this petition. I will ensure that my Convener sees the draft quickly and will let you have any comments he may have. A copy of the response which issues to the petitioner should also be sent to me, to allow me to formally notify the PPC of the action proposed.
Please contact me should you wish to discuss the handling of this petition further.

Steve Farrell
Public Petitions Clerk
PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE – MEMBERS’ BRIEFING

PETITION PE82: Comann nam Parant (Naiseanta)

Date Received: 28 January 2000

Subject: Gaelic in Education

Background: Petition calling for the Scottish Parliament to take active steps to recognise the validity and educational benefits of Gaelic-medium education.

Comann nam Parant (Naiseanta) is the national parental support organisation which acts as an "umbrella" group to represent the interests of parents who chose Gaelic-medium education (GME) for their children. It is a voluntary organisation with charitable status, managed by its own parental member representatives.

The main aim of the petitioners is the introduction of legislation to require local authorities to make provision for GME where reasonable demand exists. While GME is supported at present and receives Government funding through the Specific Grants Scheme, its provision by local authorities is not statutorily based. They consider that this legislation should be included in the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Etc. Bill. Stage 1 of this Bill is currently being considered by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee.

The issues raised in the petition were communicated to the Executive by the petitioners as part of the consultation exercise it carried out prior to the publication of the Bill.

Suggested Action: It is suggested that the petition should be passed to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee asking it to take the issues raised into account as part of its consideration of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Etc. Bill.

Public Petitions Clerk
9 February 2000
PETITION

TO

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT PETITIONS COMMITTEE

To the Scottish Parliament.

GAELIC-MEDIUM EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

We, the undersigned, declare that the system whereby some pupils in the state education system are educated through the medium of the Gaelic language, urgently needs to be placed on a statutory basis in order to ensure its security and maintain quality of its future provision.

The Petitioners therefore request that the Scottish Parliament takes active steps to recognise the validity and educational benefits of Gaelic-medium education (GME) by:

a) introducing legislation to require local authorities, as a matter of priority, to make provision for GME at every level at which reasonable demand exists, on the basis that the choice of education in Gaelic for pupils in state education schools should be available as a parental right;

b) actioning such legislation in terms of The Standards in Scotland’s Schools Etc. Bill currently under consideration by the Scottish Parliament; and,

c) ensuring that in schools where education in Gaelic is desired by parents for their children, the GME system is given parity of provision with education through the medium of English.

Airson Foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig adhartachadh
Aiream Charthannais SCO23258
Nearch-a-nimichte / Principal petitioner

Iain MacLeod / John Macleod
Cathraiche / Convenor
Comann nam Parant (Naiseanta)
'Aun Darach'
15 Tha Murrays
Dun Eideann / Edinburgh
EH17 8UD

Fón / Tel - 0131 664 2606 Post-dealain / E-Mail – johnmacleod@talk21.com

Ainm sgriobhte / Signature

Ceann-latha / Date

Fàc Pàipear-taice B airson ainmean luchd-tacit
For supporting signatories, see Annexe B
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gaelic-medium education (GME) is the system of education that has been established in a number of Scottish state schools since 1985, whereby pupils are educated in the Gaelic language in accordance with the Government’s 5 – 14 Curriculum, the aim being to bring pupils to a level of equal competence in both languages by the end of the primary education stage. From the early beginnings of 24 pupils in two Gaelic Medium Units in 1985, there are now 1831 pupils receiving GME in 59 Units at primary schools throughout Scotland. A dedicated Gaelic Medium School opened in Glasgow in 1999, and in the same year a number of primary schools in the Western Isles were designated as Gaelic Schools. Additionally, 232 pupils in secondary schools receive some specialist subject teaching in Gaelic.

2. While GME is supported and receives government funding through the mechanism of the Specific Grants Scheme, its provision by local authorities is not statutorily-based, but is made available on a goodwill basis in response to parental demand.

3. Comann nam Parent (Naiseanta) (CnP(N)) is the national parental support organisation which acts as an ‘umbrella’ group to represent the interests of parents who choose Gaelic-medium education for their children. It is a voluntary organisation with charitable status, managed by its own parental member representatives. The primary aim of CnP(N) are ‘to advance education through the medium of Gaelic’. Nationally, the organisation seeks to present the parental viewpoint to local and central government and other agencies, and to liaise with Gaelic development organisations and educational bodies. A Parental Support Officer, funded with government help, is employed by Comunn na Gàidhlig (CNAG) to support parents and encourage interest in GME. Local Comann nam Parent groups exist in most areas where GME is delivered and they nominate the member representatives of CnP(N). These local groups, which are recognised by the different local authorities, offer support, representation, information, and a link network for parents.

4. The Scottish Executive commissioned study by Professor Richard Johnstone, Scottish Cllr, University of Stirling, (The Attainments of Pupils receiving Gaelic-medium Primary Education in Scotland (1999)) has reinforced parents' belief in GME. The report concluded that ‘pupils receiving Gaelic-medium primary education, whether or not Gaelic was the language of the home, were not being disadvantaged in comparison with children educated through English. In many though not all instances they outperformed English-medium pupils and in addition gained the advantage of having become proficient in two languages’. Professor Johnstone’s research findings are in line with similar research carried out in Wales where the educational benefits of Welsh-medium education are also confirmed.
5. Her Majesty's Inspectorate recently criticised Scottish pupils' poor record of language learning. Parents whose children are educated in Gaelic strongly believe that GME offers pupils an excellent education while at the same time developing multi-lingual skills in pupils that will enhance their educational knowledge and future employment prospects. Such a sound educational initiative should be encouraged and actively promoted by ensuring official recognition for GME within a legislative framework. In addition, this could only boost the Scottish Executive's commitment to 'ensure a world class school system for Scotland'.

6. The renewed interest at local and national level of Mods and Feisean is due in no small measure to the growth of GME in the past decade. Such cultural spin-off benefits are to be welcomed, and are an encouraging sign in the maintenance of Scotland's heritage and cultural development.

7. Current government funding for GME is delivered as part of a package aimed at assisting the development of the Gaelic language. Such funding has understandable budgetary limitations, and on occasions when increased investment is required to take account of rising interest in GME, other areas of language development suffer cuts in funding e.g. Gaelic broadcasting. It is essential, therefore, that GME is recognised as an education system comparable to education through the medium of English, and consequently eligible for proportionate funding within the education budget.

8. At the beginning of this new Millennium; at the early stages of a new Parliament; at a time when CNAG's 'Inbhe Thearainn dhan Ghaidhlig' document (26th May 1999) seeking security of status for Gaelic, including a legal right for parents to have their children educated in Gaelic, is being supported by the Scottish Executive; at a time when Parliament is on the verge of passing its first Education Act; there exists a unique opportunity to underline the value of Gaelic-medium education (and by implication the value of the Gaelic language) by accepting the terms of this petition, the import of which has already been communicated to the Scottish Executive as part of the public consultation process for the 'Improvement in Scottish Education Bill', now re-named 'The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Bill'.

ATHCHUINGE

GU

COMATAIDH ATHCHUINGEAN PARLAMAID NA H-ALBA

Gu Pàrlamaid na h-Alba.

FOGLHAM TRO MHEADHAN NA GAIDH Lig AN ALBA

Tha sinne, a tha air-ar a-ainmeachadh gu h-iosal, dhen bheachd gu bheil lán thide aig Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig a tha mar phàirt de dh’Iochglam steidhichte, a bhith air a chur air bunait laghail gu dèanamh cinnteach gur bh i eair a dhion agus gu maire e aig inbhe àrd anns na bliadhnaichean ri teadh.

Mar thoradh air an sin, tha na tha air an ainmeachadh ag iarraidh gun tuig Pàrlamaid na h-Alba cho cudromach agus cho buannachdail ’s a tha Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FTMG) le bhith:

a) a’ cruthachadh laghan a bheir air ughdarrasan ionadail, mar ri a tha eiseal, FTMG a thairgse aig gach ire far a bheil iarritas reusanta ann air a shon, a’ gabbail ris gum bu chuir roghainn aird FTMG ann an sgòiltean steidhichte a bhith aig pàrantan mar chòir;

b) a’ sreadh gum déighheadh a leithid de lagh a chur an gniomh a-réir Bile Inbhe Sgoiltean na h-Alba air a bheil Pàrlamaid na h-Alba a’ meòrachadh an-dràsda fhéin; agus,

c) a’ déanamh cinnteach gum faigh FTMG co-ionannachd ris na tha air a thairgse ann an foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla, far a bheil iarritas bho phàrantan airson foghlam Gàidhlig don cuid chloinne.

Airson Foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig adhartadadh
Airean Charthannais SC022258
Neach-ainmichte/Principal petitioner

Iain MacLeod/John Macleod
Cathraiche/Convener
Comann nam Parant (Naiscanta)
‘An Darach’
15 The Murrays
Dun Eideann/Edinburgh
EH17 8UD

Fôn/Tel - 0131 664 2606                  Post-dealain/E Mail – johnmacleod@talk21.com

Ainn sgriobhite/Signature  

Ceann-latha/Date  

Faic Pàipear-taice B airson ainmean luchd-taciu
For supporting signatories, see Annexe B
1. Tha Foghlan tro Mheadhan na Gáidhlig (FTMG) air a bhith air a’ taighinn ann an cuid de sgoltean ann an Alba bho 1985. Tha a’ chlann air an oideachadh a-réir curaicealami 5-14 an Riaghaltas, leis an amas gum bi iad fileanta ann an dá chuid Gáidhlig agus Beurla mus fág iad a’ bhun-sgoil. Thòistich FTMG ann an dà Aonad Gáidhlig le 24 pàsde ann an 1985 agus tha a-nis 1831 a’ fhaighinn FTMG aig ire bun-sgoil ann an 59 Aonad air feadh Alba. Dh’fhosgail Sgoil Ghaidhlig ann an Glaschu ann an 1999 agus, anns an aon bhlàdhna, chomharraich Comhairle nan Eilean Sgitheanach de na goileanta mar sgoltean Gáidhlig. A bharrachd air a sin tha 232 a’ fhaighnn cuid de chuspairean ard-sgoil air an teagasg tro mheadhan na Gáidhlig.

2. Ged a tha FTMG a’ fhaighinn taic bhon Riaghaltas tro Seama nan Tabharatasan Sònraichte, chan eil an solar bho ुghdarrasan ionadail ri fhaighinn gu laghallach ach le cin-math luchd politeis agus iarrtasan bhon phàrantan.

3. Tha Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta) (CnP(N)) na bhuidheann taic do phàrantan, a bhios a’ riochdachadh guth nam pàrant aig ire nàiseanta. S’e buidheann saor-thoilceach a th’ innit le inbhe cathrannais agus tha e air a rith le na buill riochdachaidh. Tha e mar amas aig CnP(N) ‘Foghlan tro Mheadhan na Gáidhlig adhartachd’. Gu nàiseanta, bidh a’ bhuidheann a’ lìbhreachadh beachdan phàrantan do dh’ùghdarrasan ionadail, an Riaghaltas agus buidhean eile agus bhithear cuideachd a’ co-obrachadh le buidhean Gáidhlig agus foghlaím. Tha Ofèigear Pàrant air a fasadh le Comunn na Gáidhlig, le taic airgid bhon Riaghaltas, guis taic a thòirit do phàrantan agus ëucleann ri iomhaigh FTMG a thogail. Bidh buidhean ionadail Comann nam Pàrant a’ coinneachadh ann an sgìrean far a bheil FTMG ri fhaighinn agus ‘s iad a tha a’ moladh cò tu chòir a dhòil air CnP(N). Tha na buidhean ionadail seo, a tha air am fhaithnigachadh le úghdarrasan ionadail, a’ tabhann taice, riochdachaidh agus fiosrachaidh do phàrantan agus cuideachd a cruthachadh cheanglaichean eadar pàrantan air feadh Alba.

4. Tha rannsachadh a chaideachd a dheanamh as leth Riaghaltas a h-Albann leis an Oll.ichard Maclain à Oilthigh Shruighlea (The Attainments of Pupils receiving Gaelic-medium Primary Education in Scotland (1999)) air creideas phàrantan ann am FTMG a nearachadh. Cho-dhù chì an aithisis, a rinne coinneas ri c’lann a bha air an oideachadh ann am Beurla, nach robh c’lann a bha a’ fhaighinn FTMG sa bhun-sgoil, an robhGáidhlig san dachaidh no nach robh, a fualang air dhòigh sam bith. ‘S ann a rinne iad na b’ foshar na cloinn ann am foghlan tro mheadhan na Beurla ann am móran shuidhichidhean, a bharrachd air na bunannachd a choisinn iad a thoábh a bhith dà-chàinnaiche. Tha co-dhùnaimidh rannsachadh an Ollaimh a’ toirt taic do na nochd sa Chuirnrig fir an deach na bunannachd ann am foighlam tro mheadhan na Cuimhir is a dhearbhadh.
5. Cháin Luchd-Sgrúdaidh an Riaghaltais sgoilearan à Alba airson cho truagh ’s a bha iad air cànannan ionnasachadh. Tha pàrantan, aig a bhell clann a’ faighinn foghlam Gàidhlig, gu mòr dhen bheachd gu bheil FTMG a’ toirt foghlaim ionmhbolta aig an aon âm ’s a tha e a’ leasachadh sgilean cànain eile a tha a’ cur rin cùid foghlaim agus cothrom an ann an saoghal obrach. Bu choir a leithid de dh’iomairt foghlaim a bhith air a bhrosachadh le bhith déanamh cinnteach gum faigh e aithneachadh eòileig air taobh staigh stèidh laghail. A thuilleadh air an sin, cha b’ urrainn seo ach cur ris na tha Riaghaltas na h-Albainn air gealtainn gus ‘déanamh cinnteach gum bi sàr shiostam foghlaim againn an Alba’.

6. Tha an úidh a thàithas a-nis a’ nochdadh ann am Mòdain agus Fèislean an comain, gu ire mhòr, air an leudachadh a tha air gabhail òite ann am FTMG thar na deich bliadhnna bhò dheireadh. Thàithas a’ cur faite air a leithid de bhuanachd an — ni a tha mar eòilbharra air cho dòchasach ’s a dh’fhaodas sin a bhith a thaobh uilichas agus leasachd cultarach na h-Alba.

7. An-dràsda tha taic airgid bhon Riaghaltas airson FTMG air a thoirt seachad mar dhòigh air taic a thoirt dhan chànan san fharsaingeachd. Tha cnapan-starra an cois a leithid, agus uaireannan nuair a bhios feum air barrachd airgid gus cothachadh ris an uidh a tha a’ nochdadh ann am FTMG, thèid taic-airgid roimmean eile de leasachd bhean Gàidhlig a lughadhachd m.e. Craoladh Gàidhlig. Tha e deatamach a-rèidh gun tèid FTMG aithneachadh mar shiostam foghlaim coltach ri foghlaim tro mheadhan na Beurla, agus airidh air taic airgid dha rèir, bhò sporan an fhoghlaim.

8. Aig toiseach na Mile Bliadhna seo; toiseach toiseachaidh na Pàrlamaide Uir; aig âm nuair a tha oidhirpean ChNAG a' sireadh Inbhe Thèarainne dhuan Gàidhlig (air fhocailseachadh 26 Cèitein 1999), le còir laghail gum faigh pàrantan an cùid chloinne oideachadh ann an Gàidhlig, a’ faighinn taic bhò Riaghaltas na h-Albann; aig âm far a bheil A’ Phàrlamaid an impis a’ chiaid Bhile Foghlaim a stèidheachadh; tha cothrom air leth ann gus luach FTMG (agus luach a’ chànan) aithneachadh le bhith a’ gabhail ri molaidean an ath-chuinge seo. Chaidh a’ mhòr-chuid dhe seo a libhrigeachd ri Riaghaltas na h-Albainn mar-thar mar phàirt dhen rannsachadh poblach a bhàthas a’ déanamh airson ‘Leasachadh ann am Bile Foghlaim na h-Alba’ air neo ‘Bile Inbhe Sgoiltean nan h-Alba’ mar a tha e air ùr-airmeachadh.
Report to Education, Culture and Sport Committee of Scottish Parliament,  
22 February 2000  
On  
Consultation with Young People  
By  
Fiona McLeod MSP

Background

At an early stage of taking evidence on various aspects of their work, it became clear to the committee that the views of young people on issues affecting their lives were not being consistently sought.

This was noted in September when the first evidence was taken on the Education Bill from Children in Scotland amongst others. And again during the inquiry into the National Arts Companies when there was questioning on the various companies work with young people.

The committee became more focused on this issue by a number of events: 10th anniversary of the UNCRC; The Children’s Promise; the publication of Standards in Scotland’s Schools Bill.

Introduction

Article 12 of the UNCRC states:
1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

The UK government became Parties to this Convention in 1991. The first report on the UK’s progress on implementation was published in 1994 and was critical of the lack on involvement of Young People as per Article 12. For the second report the Scottish Office attempted to redress this situation by commissioning Save the Children to survey Young People’s views. This resulted in the report ‘Our Lives’.
Research on consultation with young people is adamant that consultation must not be tokenistic, manipulative and decorative (Hart, 1992). The Committee demanded that this should not be the case in Scotland.
Current Situation

Since May 1999 the Scottish Executive has averred that they are committed to Article 12, yet evidence to date does not paint a consistent picture.

- Minister’s Statement to Parliament on the consultation procedure for the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Bill excluded pupils from the groups to be consulted. This was revised on questioning. (OR 1(11), 23/6/99)
- The web site which was subsequently established had child-friendly opening pages which led disappointingly and unhelpfully to the dense text of the Bill. Save the Children were commissioned to carry out ‘focus group’ work with pupils at a late stage in the process.
- Minister’s Statement to Parliament on consultation on membership of ‘quangoes’ did not include young people as a priority group for inclusion. Again revised on questioning. (OR 4(9) 9/2/00)
- The Depute Minister’s evidence to this committee on consultation on the National Cultural Strategy made it clear that again young people had been ‘added in’ late in the process. (OR Meeting 7, 9/11/99)
- Most recently the consultation on *The physical punishment of children in Scotland* includes many organisations which work with children and young people but no provision for direct consultation with those most directly affected by this legislation ie the children themselves.
The Evidence

There is a substantial body of literature exploring the ways in which children and young people can be and are being consulted in the development of services.

In Scotland there are one million young people under 18 years of age who have the “right to be actors in their own lives and not merely passive recipients of adult decision making” (Lansdown, 1995 p2). The days of the old Scottish adage that children should be seen and not heard must be firmly in the past.

The literature is also clear that there are accepted methodologies for effective consultation with young people – even the very young. Consequently, there are reports of the use of many imaginative and participatory tools. Indeed, our own committee has just recently (16 February 2000) taken tentative steps in this direction, with our working groups with young people on Improving Scotland’s Schools. Before Christmas, many of us saw and were part of the excellent TAG Theatre Group role-playing with young people in the Chamber itself.

These tools encompass artwork, drama, practical projects, photography and much more. Above all, what we as adults must learn is that they must be “specific to individual needs in individual contexts” (Smith & Barker, 1999, p44). Most importantly we must learn that adult defined and adult centred methods of research and consultation have been shown to be inappropriate and ineffective with children and young people (Morrow & Richards, 1996).

These theories have been put into practice in a number of different settings with often remarkable results. In Plymouth in 1995, a PYPA21 Group was established involving young people from 3 to 15 years in environmental decision making. This was so successful that the main difficulty for the local council was in providing support for “an initiative growing so rapidly. But this is an encouraging kind of problem” (Miller, 1997,p13).

Last year, Angus Council worked with young people to produce an audio cassette and leaflet on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Not
only will this ensure that young people know of their rights, they will know that they wrote the leaflet themselves.
Conclusion

This brief review of the literature provides the proof that effective consultation with young people is possible. It also confirms that it MUST be done. Young people are a vibrant part of our society, they are Scotland’s future, and they must be part of the very processes of their country and democracy. Young people have rights, they can manage their responsibilities and they should have our respect.

“While the UK government can claim to have ratified the UN Convention, it will only realise its potential with effective government legislation promoting children’s participation …Moreover, effective ways of consulting children clearly need to be adopted by policy makers to make children’s participation a reality” (Smith & Barker, 1999, p45).

Recommendation

That the committee proceeds to a full inquiry on “mainstreaming” consultation with young people into all aspects of legislation.

References


Bibliography

Fiona will produce an extended bibliography, including web links, shortly.
WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ABOUT CHILDREN'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION?

Existing reports and research contain a range of views from children and young people on education. To demonstrate the potential advantages of such 'meta-analysis', a quick survey was done of existing consultation and research material that has asked children in Scotland about educational issues. This has not been done comprehensively – but could be quite easily.

Children want changes in schools' physical and teaching environments

- Certain school playgrounds are described as boring, anti-social, in poor physical condition, dangerous and sexist. (3) Many young people feel there is a lack of after-school activities. (6)
  - I don't like the puddles in the ground, especially the one closest to the school. It is nearly always deep and you could fall in. (3)
  - The girls are not allowed to play on the football pitch. (3)
- Large class sizes can make it difficult for teachers to give young people the support they needed to do well. (6)
  - It's difficult if there are 20 of you. There should be 4 teachers in the classroom. I think the classes should be smaller. (6)
- The school day and lessons are too long. In contrast, many young people felt the summer holidays were too long. (6)
- Mixed experiences of mainstream and special schooling, for children with disabilities.
  - Teachers did not understand [at mainstream schools] or know how to teach people with visual or hearing impairments. (young person (9))
  - Special school teacher looked at the clock and gave up trying to explain things if you didn't grasp them quickly. (young person (9))
  - The only good thing about coming here is that I might not have done quite as well in a class of 30, with all the time I've missed ... here I have a physio, a nurse and I'm able to sit down and rest. (young woman at special school (10))

Bullying, Discipline and Feeling Safe

- 30% of girls and 25% of boys thought they were bullied 'a lot' by other students. The highest percentages were from children aged 12-15. (5)
  - In Scottish research, 50% of secondary school pupils said they had been bullied at school at least once or twice during their school careers. Slightly fewer (44%) admitted that they had bullied someone else. 25% said they had been involved 'sometimes or more often' in bullying. (9)
Of the 942 secondary school pupils questioned, 145 had been recently picked on or called names, 71 had been hit or kicked, 49 had been rejected and 15 had suffered from extortion. Of those victimised, 44% said that bullying usually takes place in the playground while 28% cited the classroom and 4% said they had been bullied on their way to or from school. (8)

I would say that bullying usually happens to people who are different (e.g. colour, religion, or some disability). People who are shy or have a weak character are usually the ones who are bullied. (13 year old girl (8))

- What schools see as violent indiscipline may be seen as Gypsy traveller children as a necessary response to name calling (1):
  ...they would keep calling me tinkies and all that and it’s not my fault. You got called tinkies a lot ... I got blamed. I told some of the teachers but the teachers said just ignore them ... (Bella Gypsy Traveller (1))

- Children appreciate when teachers respond effectively to bullying (1).

The Need to Have Someone to Speak to

- Pupils’ experiences of career guidance were varied and haphazard. (6)
  There are too many academic subjects and not enough subjects in practical skills ... to get a job. If you don’t want to go to college or university, what routes would you take in order to go out and get a job? (6)

- Most young people said they were more likely to look for support and guidance from peers, parents and youth workers rather than from a school staff member. A group of vulnerable and excluded young people spoke strongly about the lack of help and encouragement they had received in class. (6)

Children do not consistently feel respected nor treated fairly

- Children with particular backgrounds do not always feel understood by their schools and teachers (e.g. Gypsy traveller children (1), young people with caring responsibilities, looked after children or young people with learning difficulties (6), refugee children (7)).

- Teachers were not always a suitable source of support for young people because they did not/could not respect pupil’s confidentiality. (4)
  We’d like teachers who don’t put people down. Young people learn when they are encouraged and supported. (6)

- Children valued being listened to, so they can maximise their school experience
  I had a helper who wouldn’t let me go in the playground. Now I write my helper’s job description and we have got it sorted! It matters that people really listen to us – I had a review where they were all there [head teacher, classroom teacher, helper, dinner lady and the school secretary] and everybody talked about me not to me! It didn’t feel like my review at all. (Lucy Mason, Council for Disabled Children Seminar (2))

- When asked if they were disciplined without humiliation in school, just over 1/2 of primary pupils and 1/3 of secondary pupils said this happened. (4)

- Many pupils perceived teachers as showing little respect for their parents. Pupils resented this. (4)

- 74% of surveyed children (580) felt that children should have a say in what is taught in school and 92% thought parents should have a say. (5)
Identified sources

Sources particularly on Scottish education:


Sources on education, UK-wide


For further information, please contact:

Susan Eales, Save the Children Fund Scotland. Tel: 0131 627 8200 e-mail: s.eales@sccf.org.uk

Katie Radcliff, Children in Scotland. Tel: 0131 222 8434 e-mail: k.radcliff@childreninScotland.org.uk
DEVELOPING CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN

We welcome the considerable interest of the Education, Sports and Culture Committee members in consultation with children and young people.

What we know about consulting children and young people

- All children and young people regardless of their age have something to contribute. The current consultation on the Improvement in Scottish Education Bill carried out by Save the Children has involved children as young as 5. The ‘Our Day’ consultative conference held in Fife involved even younger children.

- Children want to know what happens to their views. They like to have feedback when they have been consulted and to see things change as a direct result of what they say.

- There are many ways to consult children. The most important criteria is that it has to be fun. Games, art, computers, making a video, questionnaires, graffiti walls and straightforward discussion - all work well but the list of possibilities is endless.

- Consultation needs to be jargon free. Asking children what they think of the draft Improvement in Scottish Education Bill will not get a lively response but asking what they like about school does get children talking.

- Children and young people are not aliens! They like honest, straightforward talking adults who are interested in what they think.

- Enlisting the support of adults who normally work with a group of children makes consultation much more effective.

- Our experience is that children and young people want to be asked what they think. They contribute their views openly.

- Consultations need to involve children and young people who are excluded. That can mean talking with groups of young people who share a common experience such as children who are looked after, Traveller children or disabled children.

- Children and young people have as many diverse views as adults. One child cannot represent all children. The particular limitations of different methods of consultation need to be taken into account.

- Adults must be committed to listening to children – which may include changing the ‘agenda’ to discuss the issues children are concerned about.
SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN

Short term
1. The Committee could receive a presentation on the outcomes of the consultation with children and young people on the Improvement in Scottish Education Bill. This would include the Scottish Executive-commissioned consultation carried out by Save the Children with 90 children aged 5 to 16 throughout Scotland in focus groups during October.

2. The Committee may have specific questions that it would like to ask particular groups of children (e.g. educational experience of 'looked after' children), on the Bill. Such a targeted exercise would be possible, if working alongside organisations working with these groups.

3. Children and young people have been consulted on a number of issues in Scotland. A 'meta-analysis', such as done in the briefing on children's view s on education, can be done quickly by people familiar with the area. The Committee could commission such papers on particular issues.

Medium term
1. A half day event could be held to look at ways of consulting children and young people. This could involve the Committee MSPs, children's organisations that promote children's participation, and children and young people who have been active in consultations. It could be organised in a participative and creative way, potentially modelling consultation methods. We would be pleased to work with the Committee to organise this.

2. Committee members may want to take a lead for all MSPs in the Scottish Parliament in developing contact with children in their local areas. This could include how to make MSP surgeries accessible to children as well as adults, publicising the use of MSP websites and 'Meet your MSP' sessions with children at their youth club or school to find out about the everyday issues that concern them.

Longer term
1. Many of the issues debated by the Committees have a direct impact on children such as the current consultation on transport. The Education, Culture and Sports Committee could lead by piloting consultation with children and young people. The experience could then influence the work of other committees.

2. This would be considerably supported by the implementation of the 'Child Strategy Statement' in the Scottish Parliament and with the establishment of a Children's Rights Commissioner. The Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights (SACR) is currently developing a model of what a Children's Commissioner could do.

3. The Scottish Executive, working with the Education, Culture and Sports Committee, could commission a representative and thorough survey on an annual basis, on particular policy issues.

Resources
The voluntary sector has considerable expertise in consulting with children and young people. This has the potential for being a considerable ongoing resource to the Committee and to MSPs.

Children in Scotland has applied for funds to help develop children's and young people's participation in policy, linking in with the (adult) Children's Policy Network. This children's network would seek to liaise with existing groups and organisations to establish a sustainable network. The Scottish Executive and Committee may wish to access this network to support particular consultations.

Save the Children's programme of work is developing methods for consulting and supporting the participation of children and young people as active citizens both in their communities and at Scottish wide level. It will be producing resources for use by organisations as well as evaluating its experience.

For further information, please contact
Sally Ellis, Save the Children, tel: 01628 706700, email: EllisS@save.org.uk
or
Children in Scotland, tel: 0131 226 2341, email: cid@cids.org.uk

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Sally Ellis, Save the Children, tel: 01628 706700, email: EllisS@save.org.uk
or
Children in Scotland, tel: 0131 226 2341, email: cid@cids.org.uk
Minister for Children & Education
Sam Galbraith MSP

Mrs Mary Mulligan
Convener
Education Culture & Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH9 1SP

Telephone: 0131-536 8400
scottish.ministers@scotland.gov.uk
Date: 1 March 2000

HAMPDEN STADIUM

Thank you for your letter of 20 January. I regret the delay in replying but the position with a possible rescue package for Hampden and for Queen’s Park Football Club has been very fluid since the appointment of the interim managers in January.

There has been a flurry of correspondence in the last two weeks some of the contents of which have been made public by one or more of the parties involved – but not by the Scottish Executive – despite the supposedly confidential nature of the exchanges.

We have become increasingly concerned that the passage of time and the crippling weight of professional fees are prejudicing the chances of achieving any rescue deal. We have responded positively to a request from the interim managers for an indication of whether the co-funders would be prepared to increase their contributions to a rescue package. Their objective is to conclude the rescue deal that was close to completion before Christmas, the costs of which have increased since then for several reasons. We have however made clear that, in addition to the conditions we and the other co-funders previously attached to our further financial involvement, the deal must be concluded soon. We hope that the action we have taken will help the interim managers conclude a rescue deal in the very near future.

I enclose a copy of the statement which was issued on my behalf on 28 February.

As soon as matters are resolved I intend to make a further statement to Parliament and thereafter would be happy to brief the Committee in open session.

SAM GALBRAITH
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Information Directorate
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Telephone: 0131-244 1111

News Release

28 February 2000

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR HAMPDEN
SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

In a final attempt to resolve the serious financial problems of Hampden Stadium, the Scottish Executive is prepared to provide an additional £600,000 to support the rescue package announced on 16 December by Minister for Children and Education Sun Galbraith.

In addition to the three original conditions attached to the rescue package, Mr Galbraith made it clear today that the offer of additional funding was on condition that the interim administrator and directors of Queen's Park Football Club and The National Stadium are committed to concluding a deal with the SFA. He is also seeking assurances that the deal will be completed by 17 March.

Mr Galbraith said:

"Any rescue package to which the Scottish Executive and the other co-funders commit public money is contingent on three conditions: that the funding gap can be bridged; that a new management structure for the stadium operation is put in place, involving the SFA; and that there is a viable business plan for the stadium.

"The interim administrator appointed by Queen's Park has now told us that the best available option for Hampden is the rescue deal put forward in December by the co-funders. Since December, however, the funding gap has increased for a number of reasons, including the worsening financial position of Queen's Park and its subsidiary TNS.

"I am therefore prepared to provide extra funding but with strict conditions attached. Unless these conditions can be met, not a penny of our rescue package will be handed over."

He concluded:

Making it work together
"I am determined to do all I can to secure the future of Hampden Park but we cannot let this run forever. It must be resolved soon."

NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

1. In a statement to the Scottish Parliament on 16 December last year, Mr Galbraith announced details of a £4.4m rescue package for Hampden Park. The Scottish Executive was prepared to put in £2.15m to that rescue package.

2. Following the decision by the Directors of Queen’s Park Football Club to seek interim administration, Mr Galbraith made a further statement to the Scottish Parliament on 12 January.

Contact: Jane Robson: 0131-244-3069
Internet: www.scotland.gov.uk