

EMPOWERING SCHOOLS

EDUCATION REFORM: PROGRESS UPDATE



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FOREWORD: DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS



Improving the education and life chances of our children and young people is the defining mission of this Government. We remain convinced that the needs of individual children and young people can best be identified and met if those who work closely with them every day are enabled to make decisions about their learning.

We consulted extensively on how we can best empower and support our schools. We have listened carefully to education professionals, local authorities, parents and pupils, who told us they strongly support the principle of empowering schools.

Our landmark agreement with Local Government is creating the conditions for meaningful school empowerment through the Headteachers' Charter – together with improved parental involvement and pupil participation and the establishment of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives.

We have always recognised that legislation alone would not drive the improvements we need. It will take a balanced combination of changes to culture and practice, enhanced capacity and supporting structures based on trust of the professionals who work in our schools. The significant progress reported in this document has been delivered through collaboration and cooperation, and while it provides the pre-conditions for a school and teacher-led system there is still more to do to truly empower our schools.

I am confident we have all the building blocks in place to deliver our vision of excellence and equity in education. We will continue to work closely with Local Government, professional associations and other stakeholders to ensure this balanced, collegiate approach remains and that implementation continues with pace and purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Swinney', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

John Swinney

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide an update on the progress to date in respect of the Scottish Government's programme of education reform. It also sets out our proposed next steps to cement progress towards a school and teacher-led system with the purpose of improving the education and life chances of children and young people.

The [Education Governance Review consultation](#) (Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellence and Equity – A Governance Review) ran from 13 September 2016 to 6 January 2017. This led to the publication of the Education Governance Next Steps in June 2017.

The [Next Steps](#) publication set out a vision of a school and teacher-led system with decision making taking place at school level. It led to the preparation of an Education Bill, the main focus of which was to provide the legal underpinning for the shift in decision making to school level. Following intensive negotiations with Local Government, a [Joint Agreement](#) was published in June 2018, which provided a means of achieving the cultural shift to a more empowered system without introducing legislation. Together the Next Steps and the Joint Agreement have provided the basis for a substantial suite of work aimed at reforming elements of the school education system in Scotland. Next Steps recommendations focused on the following areas: career pathways; parental engagement; school improvement; regional collaboration; fair funding; school leadership; and teacher professionalism.

The Joint Agreement committed Scottish Government and Local Government to deliver the following actions through a number of shared pieces of work overseen by the HM Chief Inspector of Education. Importantly, the Joint Agreement with Local Government supported the Scottish Government's decision to work in partnership to make progress towards the empowered system, rather than introduce legislation. The Joint Agreement proposed that collective efforts should focus on:

- meaningful school empowerment through the establishment of a [Headteachers' Charter](#) and associated guidance;
- the creation of a local authority self-evaluation framework to test school empowerment; and
- the development of an overarching evaluation strategy.

Discussions resulted in the establishment of the Joint Agreement Steering Group, to oversee the delivery, in partnership with Local Government and the education sector, of the empowerment reforms. Key work streams involving a range of partners were also established to lead on the co-production of the Headteachers' Charter and [associated guidance on school empowerment](#); on developing a Local Government self-evaluation framework for measuring and promoting school empowerment; and on formulating a strategy to measure the extent and impact of school empowerment across the system.

In the period since June 2018 clear progress has been made. The commitment and actions taken forward by the Joint Agreement Steering Group and its work streams are building the conditions through which genuine school empowerment will flourish. This work demonstrates collaboration at all levels of Scottish education and is an example of partners working effectively and collaboratively.

Our shared achievements include the publication of a draft Headteachers' Charter ([see Annex A](#)), further development of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) and the development of revised [Devolved School Management Guidelines](#). Equally important, has been the completion of work on behalf of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers, in respect of proposed [new career pathways](#) for teachers.

The Joint Agreement has helped to provide the stability needed for meaningful partnership working. This sense of shared commitment to empowerment is further demonstrated in the [recent pay deal](#) agreed with Local Government and the teacher unions. Improving teachers' pay is an important element in enhancing the attractiveness of the profession, as part of a wider strategy to address recruitment and retention challenges. This includes the package of additional measures, agreed as part of the pay deal, which sets a shared agenda on addressing workload, additional support for learning and empowering schools. This landmark partnership agreement will provide the stability we need to drive empowerment and deliver the best possible outcomes for our young people.

The progress with the Joint Agreement and with wider measures accompanying the pay deal provide the context for meaningful collaboration, but we recognise that this does not in itself result in the improved outcomes for children and young people that everyone in the education system is committed to. As we take this agenda forward it is therefore important we evaluate the impact of change.

In recent months Education Scotland have published the following thematic inspections as initially outlined in the Joint Agreement:

- [Readiness for empowerment – published in December 2018;](#)
- [Empowerment for curriculum leadership – published in March 2019;](#) and
- [Empowerment of parent and pupil participation - published in June 2019](#)

These inspections have identified progress in empowerment and the support which exists in the system. However, HM Inspectors of Education found that, as expected, there is still more to be done to realise our collective ambition for an empowered, collaborative system. The Chief Inspector, as independent Chair of the School Empowerment Steering Group, highlighted that there has to be a careful balance between providing the right amount of governance and accountability while at the same time allowing leaders and practitioners the flexibility and autonomy to meet their pupils' needs.

In her role as independent Chair of the group, in June 2019 the Chief Inspector provided an update on the work of the School Empowerment Steering Group to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Skills and the COSLA Children and Young People Spokesperson. She outlined the significant progress that has been made and confirmed the Steering Group's continued commitment to develop further resources to support the delivery of an empowered system. The Chief Inspector also highlighted the clear commitment and collegiate approach of all partners involved and gave her recommendation for the continued delivery of these reforms through a non-legislative partnership approach.

The following chapters of this document detail progress and highlight next steps in respect of key elements of the education reform agenda.

CHAPTER 1: HEADTEACHERS' CHARTER

Next steps

In the Next Steps publication, we committed to:

- Clearly define school leadership responsibilities through a Headteachers' Charter developed in partnership with the profession and professional associations.

Joint agreement

The Joint Agreement committed signatories to:

- Establish a Headteachers' Charter that – working collaboratively with their local authority, staff and parents, and with due regard to employment law and supporting guidance – will empower headteachers in decisions on curriculum design, improvement, school staffing structures and appointments.

Progress

A Headteachers' Charter has been produced in partnership with the education system. This was published as an agreed draft on 7 February 2019 alongside guidance for school leaders. These documents retain the original ambition of ensuring headteachers have clear decision making powers in respect of staffing, budgets, improvement and curriculum as envisaged in the draft Education Bill.

The Headteachers' Charter, school leaders guidance and more generally the model of empowerment are now being used by schools and local authorities to plan their work. They are also being used to support professional learning for school leaders and on 29 May Education Scotland launched an [enhanced leadership support package](#) designed specifically to support headteachers operating in an environment characterised by greater school-based decision making. This builds on the well received [Excellence in Headship](#) programme which includes Columba 1400 Headteacher Leadership Academies.

It is vital that the role of headteacher remains attractive to as wide a range of the profession as possible. With this in mind, the Head in a New Direction recruitment campaign was launched at the 2018 Scottish Learning Festival. The campaign seeks to highlight the unique and rewarding role of headteachers and encourage more teachers to consider a future in headship. It is part of the broader Teaching Makes People campaign and combined with a greater focus on succession planning and our existing support for teachers wishing to take the steps to a headship role we aim to build increased interest in the role of headteacher.

Going forward

Our expectation remains that headteachers will be provided with the opportunity to exercise the ability to take key decisions as set out in the Headteachers' Charter. The existing draft [guidance for school leaders](#) will be augmented with a full range of additional empowerment guidance covering:

- Learners;
- Local authority and RICs;
- Scottish Government and national organisations;
- Partners;
- Support staff;
- Teachers and practitioners; and
- Parents and carers.

It is expected that this full suite of guidance will be published in draft later this year before being finally agreed in June 2020.

The strengthening of school empowerment across the system will ensure that the actions and behaviours set out in the Joint Agreement are embedded into every day practice – including through local authority self-evaluation, support and challenge from Education Scotland through regional delivery, professional learning and leadership, scrutiny functions, curriculum design, delivery of new devolved school management guidelines and the publication of a new Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) Code of Practice. This expectation will be further embedded into the education system in revised Professional Standards, managed by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), which are due to be published in advance of the August 2020 school term.

An important part of this developing suite of advice in support of empowerment are the new Devolved School Management Guidelines which were published in June 2019. The guidelines promote transparency, consistency and equity in funding for schools. Developed in partnership with COSLA, Local Government and headteacher representatives, these build on and improve previous guidelines and provide headteachers and schools with the autonomy and flexibility to ensure that local decisions are, wherever possible, made as close to the learner as possible. The new guidelines will be implemented in all local authority areas by April 2021.

CHAPTER 2: PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Next steps

In the Next Steps publication, we committed to:

- Strengthen, modernise and extend (to early years) the legislation on parental involvement. The draft 2018 Education Bill proposed to update definitions to reflect engagement in learning, strengthen the duties on headteachers to involve and engage parents, strengthen the requirements on local authority parental involvement strategies and provide a new focus on schools' responsibilities to provide simple, practical advice on learning in the home.
- Statutory guidance will make it clear that schools should identify a teacher or professional with responsibility for promoting parental, family and community engagement.

Joint agreement

The Joint Agreement committed signatories to:

- Build on good practice to ensure that: headteachers and schools work collaboratively with their Parent Council, wider parent forum and community on matters of school policy and improvement; local authorities continue to be responsible for promoting the involvement of parents and supporting schools in this, including through the review of the local authority parental engagement strategies; and that the principles of parental involvement and engagement extend to early learning and childcare settings.

Progress

In place of primary legislation a commitment on parental and community empowerment was included within the Joint Agreement. To complement this work national and Local Government developed a joint Scottish Government and COSLA plan to improve parental involvement and engagement: The [Learning Together National Action Plan 2018–2021](#) (published July 2018). This plan, which includes 52 actions covering parental involvement, parental engagement, communication, family learning, and other key themes, demonstrates our long-term commitment to put parents at the heart of their children's learning, and reflects the importance we place on parental engagement within a range of Scottish Government education policies and initiatives.

Progress with the plan is being overseen by a joint group involving national parent organisations, COSLA, ADES and national bodies. A local authority joint implementation statement is included within the action plan. To support broader culture changes and improvement, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland created a national network on parental involvement and engagement in May 2019. In addition the Deputy First Minister has appointed an initial tranche of parental engagement champions in schools and early learning centres. In early years, parental involvement is included in the national standards for Early Learning and Childcare and an [online resource](#) and guidance has been developed to help parents make informed choices about the right early learning and childcare setting for their child.

The suite of guidance designed to support school empowerment will include a section on the empowerment of parents and carers. The development of this section of the empowerment guidance has been led by the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPF). Allied to this, Education Scotland is working with the NPF to develop a parent-friendly version of this guidance, ensuring that Parent Councils and the wider parent forum understand and can engage in school-based decision making. This guidance will complement [existing good practice guidance](#) which was updated by Education Scotland in March 2019.

Strengthened statutory guidance on parental involvement and engagement is also being drafted. We convened a working group earlier in 2019, comprising of national parent organisations, ADES, and other partners, and expect to consult on draft amended guidance later in 2019. We also know that some parents face additional barriers to being involved and engaged. This is why we are providing £350,000 of funding over two years (2019–2021) for a small number of projects and activities to support equalities work covering a range of protected characteristics and groups.

Going forward

Parental involvement and engagement is a key theme in our empowerment reforms as well as an integral part of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for education. As the Joint Agreement and associated empowered system guidance and support – including the specific guidance on empowerment of parents and carers – is embedded into everyday practice, this will strengthen engagement with parents and the wider school community on decisions affecting our children and young people. This will be reinforced and supported by strengthened statutory guidance to support the 2006 Parental Involvement Act.

Local authorities will use the self-evaluation on school empowerment toolkit to assess how Local Government partners are supporting parental and community engagement in school decision making. This will include identifying where, through collaboration and shared learning, local authorities and RICs can further support schools in engaging effectively with parents and the wider school community. This activity will be complemented by data and information gathered from school and early learning centre pre-inspection questionnaires as well as a new [Parental Involvement and Engagement Census](#) which is being piloted in a number of local authorities in 2019. Data from a range of evidence sources will be included in the annual National Improvement Framework reports under the NIF's parental engagement driver.

The third Education Scotland thematic inspection, on parent and pupil participation is complete and was published in June 2019. We will work with Local Government partners and Education Scotland to take forward its findings.

CHAPTER 3: LEARNER PARTICIPATION

Next steps

In the Next Steps publication, we committed to:

- Strengthen the voice of children and young people by supporting all schools to promote and support pupil participation. As part of this we will consult on a requirement that every school pursues the key principles of pupil participation.

Joint agreement

The Joint Agreement committed signatories to:

- Build on good practice so that schools ensure that children and young people participate meaningfully in their own learning, in decision making relating to the life and work of their school, and in the wider community.

Progress

The Headteachers' Charter places a central requirement on headteachers – and through that to the wider empowered system – to support and encourage children and young people to participate in decisions about their own learning and the life of the learning community.

In April 2018, in advance of the School Empowerment reforms, Education Scotland published practical [guidance to schools](#). Education Scotland continues to promote this guidance and support to schools in order that they can better support learner participation. Guidance on learner empowerment will be included in School Empowerment guidance which will be published later in 2019. Early work on this guidance took place in spring 2019, and involved a wide range of young person organisations, academics, system leaders and young people themselves.

As a means of ensuring children and young people play a much stronger role in informing national education policy, the [Scottish Learner Panel](#) has been established. The Panel's initial report will be published later in 2019. The Panel joins a range of established young person policy forums and groups such as the [Young Ambassadors for Inclusion](#) in relation to additional support for learning. This work will take full account of the wider policy and practice landscape, not least the central importance of learner voice and participation within the curriculum as well as the Scottish Government's commitment to ensure that children's human rights are embedded in all aspects of society.

Going forward

The Learner Empowerment section of the School Empowerment guidance will be published later in 2019.

Further information on the extent and effectiveness of learner participation and empowerment will be gathered through the empowered system local authority self-evaluation and school inspection processes, and via the Education Scotland thematic inspection on Parent and Pupil Participation published in June 2019. We will work with Local Government, Education Scotland and other partners in building on that work.

CHAPTER 4: REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVES

Next steps

In the Next Steps publication, we committed to:

- Working in partnership with local authorities and partners to develop the shape and composition of the RICs. We will ensure that the experience of current and emerging partnership working informs the establishment of RICs.
- Provide a clear vision and framework within which effective school level collaboration can take place. We will work with partners to develop this framework and support development of resources and tools to support collaborative approaches in the classroom. As part of their inspection process Education Scotland will look at how schools and establishments are working collaboratively with others and we will share evidence about what works.

Joint agreement

The Joint Agreement committed signatories to:

- Local authorities will work collaboratively in Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) as detailed in the guiding principles and functions agreed by the [Joint Steering Group on Regional Improvement Collaboratives for Education](#) in September 2017.

Progress

All [six RICs](#) delivered their first full Regional Improvement Plans in September 2018 (following initial, interim plans in January 2018). We have supported the delivery of those plans through additional funding from Scottish Government and through the provision of expert support from Education Scotland. Together with the commitment and support of Local Government, this has enabled each RIC to further develop its dedicated regional capacity for improvement and collaboration, thereby extending the reach, visibility and impact of the RICs over the 2018-19 school year.

In addition, the RICs have significantly developed their regional capacity for collaborative improvement during the 2018-19 school year. This has been developed through the continued commitment and support of Local Government, through effective regional leadership, governance and programme management, and through the provision of additional Scottish Government funding of around £5 million, with further focussed support from Education Scotland. The early impact of this work is being evidenced through each RICs delivery of their September 2018 Regional Improvement Plans, including their significant and structured engagement with teachers and other partners, their promotion of teacher networks to share best practice and learning, and through the design and delivery of new regional interventions on attainment, curriculum development, leadership development and quality improvement.

An [interim review](#) of the establishment of the RICs was published in February 2019. It recognised the significant early progress that had been made in establishing local governance, leadership and buy-in across each RIC area and identified areas for further development.

Going forward

We remain committed to supporting collaborative working through the RICs which will embed and build on the early work that each area has taken to secure the expertise, and develop the infrastructure needed to deliver their regional improvement plan.

The evaluation of early interventions and the effectiveness of the new collaborative networks and approaches will also inform further improvement in the support provided by each RIC. We therefore anticipate that the reach and the impact of RICs will develop further during the 2019-20 academic year, as they extend their operational impact, as envisaged in the September 2017 Joint Steering Group report. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting the continued development of each RIC.

Education Scotland is also continuing to strengthen its support to schools through the RICs. This includes the key appointment of a Senior Regional Adviser to each RIC area, to broker expert education support and guidance within and across RIC areas. To inform their continued development, and as agreed with Local Government, a further and fuller review on the reach and impact of RIC activity will be undertaken later in 2019. This will include a review of the RIC contribution to an empowered system as set out in the Joint Agreement.

CHAPTER 5: ENHANCING EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Next steps

In the Next Steps publication, we committed to:

- Consult on establishing an Education Workforce Council for Scotland which will take on the responsibilities of the GTCS, the Community Learning and Development Standards Council and register other education professionals. The full scope of the functions to be undertaken by this body will be included in our consultation on our Education Bill in autumn 2017.

Joint agreement

The Joint Agreement noted that:

- There was consensus on the principle of widening registration in an Education Workforce Council (EWC) to others involved in learning and teaching, but that significant change in this area should be carefully considered.

Progress

Responses to the consultation on the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill demonstrated that, whilst there was support for the principle of expanding the range of practitioners who could benefit from the support offered by a national registration scheme, there was limited support for the establishment of the proposed Education Workforce Council for Scotland therefore the decision was made not to establish this new body. [Consultation on the provisions of the Education \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

Having decided not to establish an Education Workforce Council we still believe there is benefit to ensuring that all those directly involved in teaching and learning have an entitlement to registration, where appropriate, and professional development to enhance the impact they have on pupils' learning as set out below:

- As of 1 April 2019 College lecturers are required to register with the GTCS. Registration will be phased over a number of years to reflect the wide range of qualifications, backgrounds and roles that lecturers in colleges bring to the sector.
- In addition, 'affiliated status' is available to Instrumental Music Instructors through the GTCS, should they wish to register voluntarily. Affiliated status offers members the benefits of registration with the GTCS.
- The National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland 2018-2023 seeks to support the continuous improvement and professional development of school librarians.
- The National Group on Home/School Link Workers will continue to build a package of support and guidance aimed at increasing Home/School Link support to schools across Scotland, including support to the workforce.

Going forward

We are working in partnership with stakeholders to facilitate a process of extending the benefits of registration to classroom support staff with the aim of developing a national empowering learning platform. We are also working with ADES and COSLA to facilitate the identification of any support requirement for Business Managers with the aim of continuing work with relevant stakeholders and Education Scotland to ensure they are able to access high quality professional learning commensurate to the important role they play in schools.

Through our collective endeavour to build an empowered education system there is an expectation that all support staff should be involved, listened to and invited to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas. These messages will be highlighted through the support staff section of the Empowered System Guidance with related links to appropriate learning opportunities.

CHAPTER 6: ENHANCING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Next steps

As part of our wider strategy to enhance the attractiveness of the profession and to address recruitment and retention challenges, we made a commitment in the Next Steps publication to:

- Work with our partners to establish new career pathways for teachers allowing greater opportunities for development and progression into leadership, specialist or improvement roles.

The importance of ensuring that teaching remains an attractive career option for new graduates and for career changers is well recognised. It is also vital that teachers and headteachers are both retained within the profession and enthused about their roles in delivering high quality education experiences for Scotland's young people. These principles were recognised in the 2017-18 teachers' pay deal, which led to the establishment of the [Independent Panel on Career Pathways for Teachers](#), and have been further recognised in the most recent SNCT pay agreement, which includes a wider package of measures aimed at addressing key issues for the profession related to workload, additional support for learning and empowering schools.

Progress

The Independent Panel on Career Pathways for Teachers, chaired by Moyra Boland, Deputy Head of the School of Education at the University of Glasgow, was established in June 2018 comprising key stakeholders with a interest in Scottish Education. The Panel used a range of methods to gather information to support the development of their recommendations, including consideration of a literature review, which was specifically commissioned for this purpose; stakeholder engagement events; a survey of all teaching staff registered with the GTCS; stakeholder surveys; and the consideration of various policy documents.

The [final report](#) of the Panel (published May 2019) sets out 10 substantial recommendations aimed at developing and supporting new flexible and exciting career pathways for teachers and headteachers. The recommendations include the creation of a new post of lead teacher, which will be established for specialist roles in curricular, pedagogical and policy delivery; new pathways for headteachers in and beyond headship; ensuring the availability of support for career development; and ensuring access to opportunities for career progression are coherent, fair and equitable.

The report also includes a clear expectation, which has been recognised by the SNCT, that the job-sizing process should be reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Going forward

The teachers' pay deal provides certainty on pay and sets a shared agenda on addressing issues relating to workload, additional support for learning, and empowering schools for the next two years. Alongside, the Career Pathways Report this agreement is testament to the importance we place on teachers and improving the attractiveness of the profession to aid recruitment and retention.

The SNCT is developing work-plans that will deliver both the recommendations of the Career Pathways Report and the SNCT pay agreement. We expect this process to be completed later in the summer of 2019. Alongside this Scottish Government will develop a plan to take forward the recommendations that are not under the remit of the SNCT.

We have also recognised that high quality teaching and leadership are vital in an empowered school system. With this in mind, the Scottish Government will continue to support the [Measuring Quality in Initial Teacher Education \(MQuITE\)](#) project, which aims to measure the quality of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) provision in Scotland by studying a cohort of those graduating in 2018 over a period of five years. This will complement information to be captured through application of the [ITE self-evaluation framework](#), produced by Education Scotland in partnership with representatives from the Scottish Council of Deans of Education and the GTCS and published in 2018 on the Education Scotland Improvement Hub.

Allied to this we are also beginning work, through the Strategic Board for Teacher Education, to consider whether more can be done to support teachers in the early phase of their career.

CHAPTER 7: EVALUATING PROGRESS

Joint agreement

The Joint Agreement committed signatories to:

- During the academic year 2018-19, local authorities will complete the self-evaluation of school empowerment in the local area.
- An evaluation strategy will be developed by August 2018 to review the impact of school empowerment.
- Education Scotland will deliver three new focused inspections in the 2018-19 academic year looking at the following themes: readiness for empowerment; curriculum leadership; and parent and pupil participation.

Progress

Local authority colleagues have engaged positively in the development of the self-evaluation tools and are piloting their development in three local authorities. Beyond this, an overarching draft evaluation strategy, designed to measure the extent and impact of school empowerment across the system is in development, and will draw on new and existing evidence sources, including teacher surveys, school and thematic inspections, local authority self-evaluation, case studies, and regional improvement collaborative plans and reports.

Education Scotland has undertaken three national thematic inspections. The evidence gathered by HM Inspectors shows the positive steps already being taken on the journey towards empowerment and the ways in which different local authorities have embraced the principles set out in the Joint Agreement. HM Inspectors found a high level of professional commitment to collaboration and co-production exists across Scottish education in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. However, findings also show clearly that, as expected, there is still more to be done to realise our collective ambition of an empowered, collaborative system.

Going forward

Understanding how empowerment is embedding across Scotland's schools will be a key part of the sector's shared work in the coming year, with this in mind, the Joint Steering Group will provide a further assessment of progress towards a school and teacher-led system in June 2020. This will follow a year of intensive and meaningful engagement across the system to engage, embed and evidence the role of empowerment in delivering excellence and equity in education.

ANNEX A: HEADTEACHERS' CHARTER AND EMPOWERED SCHOOLS DIAGRAM

Agreed Draft as published on 7 February 2019

An empowered system is built on mutual trust, cooperation and highly effective communication. In an empowered system headteachers and local authorities are partners, each contributing and supporting each other and respecting the different role each plays.

The role of headteacher is recognised as a distinct leadership position in the General Teaching Council for Scotland's Professional Standards and in national conditions of service. As senior officers of the Local Authority, responsible for the leadership and management of the service provided to children, young people and their families, headteachers are accountable to both their employer and to their learning community for the leadership and management of education within their setting.

The Local Authority has statutory responsibility for the provision and improvement of education in the area. This includes contractual and financial obligations that interact with, and can be dependent upon, decisions made at school level. The Local Authority can intervene in a school level decision if a statutory, contractual or financial obligation would be breached. Clear processes and mutually respectful and supportive relationships should be in place to minimise the need for such intervention.

In an empowered system local authorities add value by enabling key decisions to be made by those who are closest to the educational experience of children and young people, and who best understand the particular context of the learning community. The headteacher is responsible for making such decisions in partnership with their learning community – staff, learners, parents and other partners.

In all localities headteachers and local authorities should work in partnership with children, young people and their families to take decisions which reflect the local context. Mutually supportive and respectful relationships should be in place and maintained in order to maximise effective collaboration. Headteachers should lead collaborative, evidence-based decision making while recognising that they are an integral part of a wider education and children's services system and open to constructive support and challenge by the Local Authority and their colleagues.

In an empowered system, headteachers should lead learning communities to determine the most appropriate approach in the following key areas:

In relation to **leading learning and teaching**, headteachers should:

- Lead collaborative work to co-design and develop the curriculum and learner pathways, including transitions, which best meet the needs of all children and young people. This should take account of the national framework for Scotland's curriculum along with the needs of local context, as agreed between schools and the Local Authority.
- Empower staff to continually improve practice, encouraging professional dialogue, supporting career-long professional learning and collaborative enquiry, and the use of research and evidence-informed practice. Headteachers should model a commitment to lifelong learning through their own practice.
- Lead change and improvement, making decisions in partnership with their learning community about the improvement priorities and plan for their school, reflecting and informing the local improvement plan and the National Improvement Framework.

In relation to **empowering the learning community**, headteachers should:

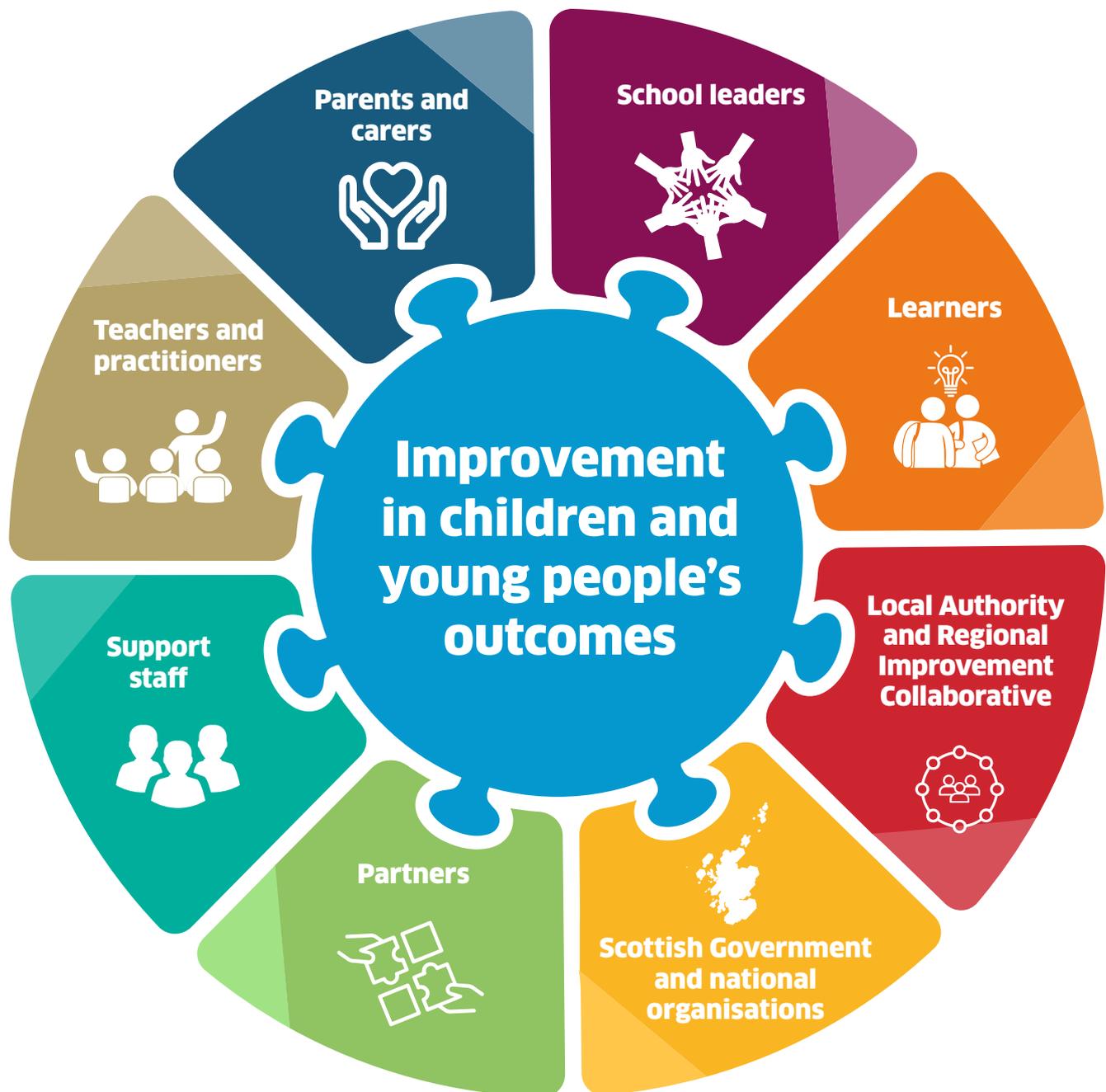
- Be collaborative and collegiate, enabling staff to lead and co-creating a supportive and empowered culture.
- Work collaboratively with their Parent Council and wider parent forum, encouraging and supporting parents to be involved in the life of the school and in decision making.
- Support and encourage children and young people to participate in decisions about their own learning and the life of the learning community.
- Promote collaboration for improvement, seeking and building relationships with other schools and partners in order to improve outcomes.
- Be active partners in multi-agency working to get it right for every child and family, working with the Local Authority and other services.
- Champion high quality professional learning for all staff, including supporting students and probationers, and lead by example.
- Actively participate in the wider corporate work of the Local Authority, consistent with their role as leaders of learning and contribute to the Regional Improvement Collaborative – accessing support and working collaboratively to lead improvement.

In relation to **making best use of the school's resources**, headteachers should:

- Manage a delegated budget in a fair, equitable and transparent way, supported by the Local Authority and a fair, transparent and equitable local Devolved School Management Scheme.
- Deploy the school's budget in accordance with best value principles and Local Authority procurement arrangements, with appropriate support and guidance from their Local Authority.
- Play an active role in designing and reviewing recruitment and staffing approaches, both for their own school/s and for the wider authority.
- Be empowered to design a staffing structure which best supports the school's curriculum and leadership requirements, working within their delegated staffing budget and supported by their Local Authority and SNCT/LNCT agreements and guidance.
- Be integral to the appointment of staff in accordance with the best interests of children and young people and work in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure good practice in recruitment and appointment, in line with SNCT/LNCT agreements and guidance.
- Work in partnership with the Local Authority, and within clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, to ensure a highly professional school team is built and sustained to meet the needs of the learning community.

An Empowered System

An empowered system grows stronger and more confident, working in partnership to lead learning and teaching that achieves excellence and equity for all learners. Empowerment and collaboration for improvement happen at all levels of the system.



ANNEX B – WEB LINKS

Education Governance – Consultation Review

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Education/education-reform-agenda/edgovrev>

Education Governance – Next Steps

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-governance-next-steps-empowering-teachers-parents-communities-deliver-excellence/>

Education Bill Policy Ambition – Joint Agreement

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-bill-policy-ambition-joint-agreement/>

A Headteachers’ Charter for School Empowerment

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/HeadteachersCharterFinal.pdf>

Empowered System Guidance Hub

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/an-empowered-system>

Devolved School Management Hub

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/devolved-school-management/>

Independent Panel on Career Pathways

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<https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/thematic-reports/National%20thematic%20inspection:%20readiness%20for%20empowerment>

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<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/Self-evaluation%20framework%20for%20Initial%20Teacher%20Education>

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