

Agenda Item	16
Report No	HC/40/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: December 9th 2021

Report Title: Scottish Government Education Reform Consultation – Highland Council Response

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Highland Council consultation process and stakeholder response to the current Scottish Government Education Reform agenda, led by Professor Ken Muir. The consultation, held both at Local Authority level and at Scottish Government level is for those who have an interest in Scottish Education to engage in helping set the direction of travel for the future of Scottish Education.

1.2 This paper summarises the various responses from Members, Educators, Officers, Parents and Carers and offers suggestions on how we can build on the strengths we have developed in Scottish education and address some of the recommendations and questions raised in both the June OECD report and the August OECD report on student assessment.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to

- i) Note the approach taken to incorporate stakeholder input into the Council's response; and
- ii) Agree to homologate the Council's submission at Appendix 1.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource. There are no direct implications as a consequence of this report. However, the scale of change being proposed means it is likely that there will be resource implications in the future.
- 3.2 Legal. The Highland Council has a requirement to implement the Gaelic Language Plan under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005 and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 contains provisions on Gaelic Education, these include placing a duty on Education Authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE).
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural). Planned improvements and the reform of Education is to support better outcomes and take cognisance of the specific challenges related to equality, poverty and rurality.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever. By fully and appropriately utilising digital technologies to support curriculum and assessment, the education system could contribute positively to the climate change / carbon clever agenda.
- 3.5 Risk. Any transition to introducing change needs to ensure a continuation of high-quality education for all learners while those changes are made. The Scottish Government consultation invites views relating to the risks of change and the implications of these on the wider education system. These risks are highlighted in section four of the consultation.
- 3.6 Gaelic. The NIF (National Improvement Framework) applies equally to Gaelic Medium education and learning. In any review of the NIF, this should be taken fully into account.

4. Overview

4.1 Context for the consultation:

“The OECD has published two reports recently on aspects of Scottish education. The first, **Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future** was published in June 2021. This report recognises that Curriculum for Excellence offers an inspiring and widely supported philosophy of education. It acknowledges the hard work done over the years by many in Scottish Education to turn the vision for Curriculum for Excellence and the refreshed narrative into meaningful learning for children and young people at all stages.

- 4.2 Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future highlights the need for a more structured and strategic approach to curriculum review and implementation in Scotland, noting in particular that the structure, learning practices and assessment approaches in the Senior Phase need adapting to be consistent with Curriculum for Excellence’s vision to allow for a smooth curriculum experience from 3 to 18 and beyond.

- 4.3 In its response to the OECD report Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future, the Scottish Government has taken the decision that the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) will be replaced and that the functions of

Education Scotland will be reviewed with the removal of the Inspectorate from its remit.

4.4 The second OECD report, **Upper-Secondary Education Student Assessment in Scotland: A Comparative Perspective**, was published in August 2021. This report was written to complement the first OECD report and sets out a number of possible ways in which improvements could be made to the alignment between Curriculum for Excellence and assessment in the Senior Phase.” [source www.scot.gov](http://www.scot.gov)

4.5 This is an initial consultation by Prof. Ken Muir, and further engagement opportunities are expected as the Scottish Government’s plans develop. In this first instance, the approach taken has been to establish connections, collaborate and highlight the contexts of the reform, enabling Officers to gather views from Members, staff, parent groups and young people and in terms of the former, there have been two all-Member seminars held. Given the situation in schools currently and the pressure on all, there has not been a high level of engagement from staff but the views gathered are representative of the national agencies submissions to the consultation. The review continues through till 2024, so we would hope the next consultation will have a wider time frame associated.

The consultation is divided into the following four sections:

1. Vision
2. Curriculum and Assessment
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Replacing the Scottish Qualifications Authority and reforming Education Scotland

5. SECTION 1. “The vision for Curriculum for Excellence reflects what matters for the education of children and young people in Scotland.”

5.1 Key points of emphasis from stakeholder engagement highlighted the need for full engagement at all levels, recognising the pressures faced currently by schools and educators in the light of the pandemic. It was felt that developments must and should take into account the learner view, in the context of the UNCRC Rights of a Child. Equally, any discussions should not have a detrimental impact on the current cohort of young people presenting for this coming diet of SQA exams.

5.2 Educators who responded to the school based survey agreed fully that the *aspirational* vision for CfE still reflects what matters for our schools. There was reflection that there had been significant educational and social change and that the vision of CfE should be revisited as a whole to ensure coherence. All agreed that at the heart of the strategic direction of the CfE should be the learner in the 21st century and that we should be avoiding all unnecessary bureaucracy. That we should reflect on the purpose of the curriculum, delivering skills, while increasing the choice of SQA academic and vocational opportunities for all.

5.3 During the Members workshops it was generally agreed that the vision statement for Curriculum for Excellence was largely unproblematic. However, there was a view that by simplifying language, we would be able to focus more on the learner and the four capacities have always held as solid policy drivers and the focus should be more on these drivers and away from bureaucracy. If the Vision statement of Curriculum for Excellence is to be revisited then it should take into account skills, employability and empowering our young people.

5.4 In terms of the collaboration and the improvement agenda, empowerment of schools and the autonomy of decision making at school level should be retained as a specific principle that should be central to any reform. Wellbeing and learning should also be valued equally and there should be balance to the breadth and depth of the curriculum.

6. **SECTION 2 - CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT** *“The OECD reports Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future and Upper-Secondary Education Student Assessment in Scotland: A Comparative Perspective make it clear that aligning curriculum, qualifications and system evaluation is essential to delivering on the commitments made in Curriculum for Excellence relating to assessment.*

2.1 Curriculum for Excellence provides a coherent progression in the journey of learners (3-18 and beyond) that gives them the best possible educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions.”

6.1 The school community survey indicated that there was still a strong belief that CfE provided a coherent progression for learners to reach their potential. There was no strong agreement either way, that learning communities were empowered and had autonomy to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners. Members in discussion posed the question that perhaps we should be taking more account of local context and a place based approach. That the complicated landscape of CfE often resulted in inconsistent approaches, as did external pressures and influences on schools.

In the second workshop with Members, transition between primary and secondary schools was a key focus to supporting progression and the learner journey. Pastoral transition was effective in most settings, so we needed to re-evaluate curricular transition. The transition from Primary 7 to Senior 1 should be seamless and we need to get this right for the age and the stage of the young person. Effective planning, the consistency of moderation and profiling should lead to a smooth transition from 2 – 18, supported by pathway planning and the Career Education Standards.

6.2 There was a positive response to the discussion about the creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency, to help address the misalignment of curriculum and assessment as outlined in the OECD report. Some educators reflected that assessment should continue to be a mix of teacher and

external assessment, yet this did not necessarily mean exams and that this should reflect the potential of pupils for the future. All agreed the commitment to the empowerment agenda and teacher ownership in developing the new agency.

- 6.3 Greater cognisance of teachers' professional judgement and not solely based on assessments, as for some young people building a portfolio to demonstrate their depth of learning over time provided a more valuable measure of understanding than an end of year exam. Members would like to see tighter benchmarking, as there was concern that there was not consistency of assessment at each level, despite a focus on moderation. This was not a reflection on the moderation process, but a reflection on Curriculum for Excellence.
- 6.4 There was significant discussion about the role of technology in supporting curriculum and assessment. Teacher resource and access to subject specialists in remote and rural areas was a key issue, as was cover for absence. Ensuring high quality digital delivery of the curriculum, required further significant investment and whilst virtual learning could not replace in person school attendance, technologies and digital resources should enhance the learner experience significantly. The Council has the capacity to support significant growth of technology and should continue on this journey.
- 6.5 In order to do so, there must be full equity of digital provision, including infrastructure and resources to enable learning and creativity. Technologies should be fully utilised to support exams, (SQA assessment systems online, accessible on any device) and systems should support especially pupils with ASN and be inclusive of GME. As the digital world develops at pace, professional learning opportunities, use of technologies in schools and the digital capacity of young people should continue to develop in tandem. This was seen as an opportunity to shape and change the educational landscape. Over the course of the pandemic, there has developed digital transformation in schools and it has been possible to connect, collaborate and innovate. All stakeholders and practitioners needed to ensure that this leads to more effective learning opportunities for learners.

7. **SECTION 3 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 7.1 *“The rationale for reform of Scottish education is to ensure that learning communities get the best possible support to provide the highest quality of learning and teaching for our children and young people. The aim is to continue to reduce the attainment gap and reduce variability in outcomes achieved by young people in different parts of the country.”*
- 7.2 The OECD report points to the need for improved clarity on functions and simplification of guidance in order that the system is more coherent and

more easily understood by all, allowing a greater focus on learning and teaching, ensuring responsiveness to local circumstances.

7.3 From the responses to the school survey, the majority indicated that they did not feel there was clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues. There was recognition that there had been quality professional learning and leadership opportunities during the pandemic. All agreed that there was a need to continue the focus on the role of research in the profession. The development of practitioners as researchers was welcome and further development in this realm would be significantly beneficial. In the Highland context, offers of support needed to reflect the needs of schools and local authorities and the specific communities that they serve.

7.4 Support from parent forums/councils and Head Teachers is good. There needed to be further relationship building between the education authority and the parent forums in order to ensure learning communities get the best possible support. Meaningful engagement built on trust formed the core principle for all.

7.5 As part of the curriculum and assessment section, scrutiny and evaluation were key topics of discussion.

7.6 Most who responded to the survey, strongly agreed that independent inspection had an important role to play in scrutiny and evaluation, enhancing improvement and building capacity. Educators commented that de-centralisation and real autonomy for schools and leadership teams is important. The sheer quantity of paperwork currently was a burden. Coherence of approach was considered; there needed to be a clearer role of leadership from Education Scotland and HMle across Scotland. Any new inspectorate should also be politically independent. Peer reviews and validated self-evaluation could play a part of equal importance in school reviews, whilst the term scrutiny should be removed.

8.0 **SECTION 4 - REPLACING THE SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY AND REFORMING EDUCATION SCOTLAND** *“The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in June 2021 the intention to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and consider a new specialist agency for both curriculum and assessment while also taking forward reform of Education Scotland, including removing the function of inspection or scrutiny from the agency. This section seeks views on how best to take forward key aspects of the Cabinet Secretary’s decision including:”*

- *Removing Scrutiny (Inspection and review) from Education Scotland*
- *Further reform of Education Scotland*
- *Replacing SQA*

• *Considering the establishment of a new Curriculum and Assessment Agency*

- 8.1 Feedback was that the new agency could make a significant difference, but it had to align to wider systems thinking. Timings of change must not undermine the current cohorts undertaking SQA qualifications during this process, nor must it add pressure to teacher workload.
- 8.2 The replacement of SQA could provide Scotland with an opportunity to address the misalignment identified between the delivery of education at the Broad General Education Level and the narrower focus within the Senior Phase required to support the delivery of national qualifications. There was dissatisfaction with the current model and, fundamentally a new model must be valid, reliable and manageable and lead to an agreed improved agency.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 The closing date for the consultation is 3rd December 2021 (extended from the 26th November 2021) and so the attached response needs to be homologated.
- 9.2 Following the submission of responses to the consultation, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence, with the analysis report published in February 2022.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Nicky Grant

Date: 30 November 2021

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Links to key documentation:

[OECD Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future](#)

[Upper-secondary education student assessment in Scotland: A comparative perspective](#)

[Broad general education | Scottish education system | Education Scotland](#)

[Senior phase | Senior phase and beyond | Scottish education system | Education Scotland](#)

Full documentation and questions for response [here](#)

Appendix 1

Highland Council's Response to Professor Ken Muir Consultation

Comments from local authority discussions have been aligned to the different sections & questions within the Scottish Government consultation

The Highland Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on proposals for the creation of a National Care Service. In preparing this response, the Council has engaged with education staff, young people, parent groups and elected Members over a number of weeks and in a wide variety of settings to bring together a considered and measured response to these proposals. It should be noted that this engagement has had to be undertaken over a relatively short time frame, including a school holidays period, and in the context of the national pandemic. This has meant that responding effectively has been very challenging and the Council would welcome continued and improved engagement opportunities as these plans are developed.

SECTION 1 - VISION

1.1 The vision for Curriculum for Excellence reflects what matters for the education of children and young people in Scotland.

1.2 What do you think should be retained and/or changed?

- Consultation on any reform needs a clear timeframe for stakeholders including response times to enable full engagement at all levels
- Developments must and should take into account the learner view, in the context of the UNCRC Rights of a Child
- This process must not have a detrimental impact on the current cohort of young people
- Educators who responded to the school based survey agreed fully that the *aspirational* vision for CfE still reflects what matters for our schools. However, there had been significant educational and social change since its inception and the vision of CfE should be revisited as a whole to ensure coherence
- Avoid all unnecessary bureaucracy
- Reflect on the purpose of the curriculum, delivering skills, while increasing the choice of SQA academic and vocational opportunities for all
- Simplifying language would enable a greater focus on the learner and the four capacities which have always held as solid policy drivers
- Collaboration; the improvement agenda; empowerment of schools; and the autonomy of decision making at school level should be retained as specific principles
- Wellbeing and learning should be valued equally
- Balance to the breadth and depth of the curriculum.

SECTION 2 - CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Curriculum for Excellence provides a coherent progression in the journey of learners (3-18 and beyond) that gives them the best possible educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions.

- Still a strong belief that CfE provides a coherent progression for learners to reach their potential at the primary level
- Complicated landscape of CfE often results in inconsistent approaches, as do external pressures and influences on schools.

Please share what you believe currently contributes to a coherent progression.

- There was no strong agreement either way, that learning communities are empowered and have autonomy to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners
- Pastoral transition was effective in most settings, so we needed to re-evaluate curricular transition

Please share ideas you may have to improve learner progression across stages and sectors.

- Improving curricular transition between primary and secondary schools was a key focus to supporting progression and the learner journey
- Effective planning, the consistency of moderation and profiling should lead to a smooth transition from 2 – 18, supported by pathway planning and the Career Education Standards.
- More account must be taken of local context and a place based approach

In practice, learning communities are empowered and use the autonomy provided by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners.

- There was no strong agreement either way, that learning communities were empowered and had autonomy to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners

Please share ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance this in future.

- More account must be taken of local context and a place based approach

The creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency will help to address the misalignment of curriculum and assessment as outlined in the OECD report 15.

- The creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency is broadly welcome
- Assessment should continue to be a mix of teacher and external assessment, but this does not necessarily mean exams and that this should reflect the potential of pupils for the future
- The commitment to the empowerment agenda and teacher ownership in developing the new agency is wholly supported

Please share your views of the potential advantages of establishing such an Agency.

- Some educators reflected that assessment should continue to be a mix of teacher and external assessment, yet this did not necessarily mean exams and should reflect the potential of pupils in the future.
- A new agency could take greater cognizance of teachers' professional judgment and not solely based on assessments, as for some young people building a portfolio to demonstrate their depth of learning over time is more reflective of their abilities
- There should be tighter benchmarking, as there was concern that there was not consistency of assessment at each level, despite a focus on moderation. This was not a reflection on the moderation process, but a reflection on CfE.

Please share your views of the potential disadvantages of establishing such an Agency.

- Impact on the current cohorts of young people taking SQA qualifications
- Disruption to the curriculum / current exam process beyond COVID

- Change that does not reflect full engagement with teachers due to the speed of the review and implementation
- Vocational and academic qualifications need to be available and considered on equal terms

Please identify the main factors, if any, that support a broader range of SQA qualifications being included in the curriculum in secondary schools.

- Career Standards 2 – 18

Please share any ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance the role of a broader variety of qualifications in the curriculum in secondary schools.

- Investment in teachers, online learning

How can Technologies be fully and appropriately utilised as a support for curriculum and assessments.

- Teacher resource and access to subject specialists in remote and rural areas is a key issue for the Highlands
- Ensuring high quality digital delivery of the curriculum requires further significant investment and whilst virtual learning cannot replace in person school attendance, technologies and digital resources should significantly enhance the learner experience
- The Highland Council has the capability to support significant growth of technology and should continue on this journey
- Technology should be used to support curriculum and assessment, however there needed to be equity of provision not just across Highland, but across Scotland.
- There needs to be full equity of digital provision, including infrastructure and resources to fully enable learning & creativity

Please share any comments you may have on the use of technologies to support curriculum and assessments, and what could be done to deliver improvements.

- Technologies should be fully utilized to support exams
- SQA assessments online and easily accessible
- Systems to support ASN and GME
- Utilising 1 to 1 device
- Was an opportunity to shape the educational landscape
- Digital transformation has taken place in our schools, but this is not reflected at SQA level

SECTION 3 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Is there clarity on where the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence lie.

- There is insufficient clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues

Please indicate where you think the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence should lie.

There is clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

Please share which aspects of the support currently provided by national agencies and other providers is working well.

- The development of practitioners as researchers has been welcome and further development in this realm would be significantly beneficial.
- Offers of support must reflect the needs of schools and local authorities

Is there sufficient trust with all stakeholders, including children, young people, parents & carers, so they are genuinely involved in decision making.

- Meaningful engagement built on trust should be the core underpinning principle for change.

Please share any ideas you may have on how trust and decision making can be further improved.

- Coherence of approach is essential

Independent inspection has an important role to play in scrutiny and evaluation, enhancing improvement and building capacity.

- As part of the curriculum and assessment section, scrutiny and evaluation are key topics of discussion and need to support improvement and positive outcomes

Please give examples of how you would like to see scrutiny and evaluation being carried out in future.

- De-centralisation and real autonomy for schools and leadership teams is important
- Lessen burden of paperwork
- Peer reviews and validated self-evaluation could play a part of equal importance in school reviews, whilst the term scrutiny should be removed.

Please share any additional comments on roles and responsibilities in Scotland's education system.

- Continue a verification system for children transitioning to employment or further education.
- This should take greater cognisance of teachers' professional judgement and not be solely based on assessments, as for some children building a portfolio to demonstrate their depth of learning over time, provides a more valuable measure of understanding than an end of year exam

SECTION 4 - REPLACING THE SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY AND REFORMING EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

- A new agency could make a significant difference, but it must align itself to wider systems thinking
- There is currently misalignment between the delivery of education at the Broad General Education Level and the narrower focus within the Senior Phase
- There is dissatisfaction with the current model, fundamentally a new model must be valid, reliable and manageable and lead to an agreed improved agency

Please share any comments or suggestions you have on how the functions currently housed in Education Scotland could be reformed.

- Any new inspectorate should be politically independent.
- It should enhance improve and build capacity

Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

- Timings of change must not undermine the current cohorts undertaking SQA qualifications during this process, nor must it add pressure to teacher workload.

Appendix 2

Feedback from the Highland Parent Council Chair Meeting 23/11/21

Given the short timeframe for the meeting to be convened, the attendance was excellent. It was noted that a number of Parent Councils have formally requested information about the timescale of the consultation, as they felt that The Highland Council had not given due consideration to the consultation process nor the pressures placed on parents/ carers currently due to the pandemic. It was explained by Officers that the Scottish Government had also set a neat timeframe for responses and this was an initial consultation only. The forum was reassured that this was the beginning of a lengthy process which was planned to extend to 2024.

Part 1 of the discussion centred on CfE and the vision. Points to note:

1. The language used in CfE guidance is not parent friendly and is 'jargonistic'
2. 'Attributes' was used as an example in the vision and it was not clear how this related or what context this was used in for parents / carers. Instead the curriculum vision should be about the learning journey, providing positive and supportive learning experiences.
3. Many parent / carers do not understand the various stages of CfE so would not be able to comment understandably on such 'big' questions in the SG consultation
4. What would be helpful was regular, pragmatic engagement with the Highland Parent Councils by Officers to unravel both the consultation and the various agencies that support young people. A good example was the role of SDS, DYW - how did they link to the employer / workplace. A mapping exercise of the CfE would help parent / carers understand the landscape of CfE

This fed into the consultation themes, as the group agreed that the complexity of CfE led to confusion and this needed to be simplified.

Discussion centred around the proposed Curriculum & Assessment agency:

1. Have Universities / Employers been part of the initial consultation? Are there plans to include them?
2. Given that an employer understands Highers / Advanced Highers in relation to the workplace requirements, how would a 'graduation certificate' or other certification sit in relation to degrees etc
3. End of year exams were unfair for many, but there would still need to be a way to fairly assess a young person

Next steps:

- Informative workshops would be well received as consultations, with outcomes and progress updates.
- Pre-recorded content from Officers / Parent Councils could be circulated prior to workshops to explain / set context / update.
- A working group could be formed to explore how this could be set up and Officers offered support for the process. This was popular and would be much easier to access than any written information / survey style. Thanks for attendance were extended on behalf of the Highland Council and the meeting concluded.

Appendix 3

The main discussion from the point of view of educators was focused on the reform of Education Scotland and the introduction of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency.

Educators shared additional comments on roles and responsibilities within Scotland's education system. In the context of this committee report, it was felt helpful to share these in their entirety, so comments are copied in whole form:

1. Reform offers de-centralisation and real autonomy for schools and leadership
2. Inspection and scrutiny should be a joint responsibility of HMle and the Authority having joint visits to allow everyone to learn, discuss and respond to the findings of school visits. This could be more supportive for school staff and if peer SMT are also able to join this process can be very powerful in raising standards across the Authority.
3. There is no clear source of high quality support at any level; inspection in principle is necessary, but stress involved needs to be considered and mitigated against support for school staff. If peer SMT are also able to join this process can be very powerful in raising standards across the Authority.
4. Inspections need to move from bureaucracy based collection of data, to genuine conversations around improvement.
5. What would help this is the removal of a grading system, instead of something which highlights what a school is doing well and what it needs to improve on.
6. I believe this would facilitate a number of things - more honesty, potential for more visits, genuine dialogue- a focus on improvement...not grading.
7. Resourcing and Multi Agency partnerships continue to impact education, especially in relation to ASL.

Please share any comments or suggestions you have on how the functions currently housed in Education Scotland could be reformed

1. As detailed previously, Authority and peer HT visits to support raising standards can work very effectively. Therefore if a successful system was established which could be supported by HMle there may not need to be a role for independent scrutiny visits from Education Scotland.
2. Not entirely sure how much Educational Reform from Ed Scotland makes it to the front line.
3. Education Scotland does not provide anything in the way of high quality professional learning or support - this needs to be addressed; there is a need for an objective body overseeing education in schools but the way this is done could be reformed to be more constructive and less stressful.
4. An independent inspection process might promote greater consistency and a degree of moderation to the approach. There is also the scope for sector/subject specific expertise with a 'support /mentor' agenda.
5. Inspection/scrutiny should be separated from Curriculum and assessment functions.
6. Inspection and scrutiny has its place, however clear support from agencies, colleagues, professionals in order to enhance the curriculum and assessment process would be advantageous.

SQA has two main roles: accreditation and awarding qualifications. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform

1. SQA needs to be completely abolished - that includes not giving those in charge roles in any new organisation formed. Assessment needs to be a mix of teacher and external assessment (incorporating digital means and not necessarily exams) and reflect the potential of pupils for the future.
2. Too much autonomy currently sits with SQA. A Leavers certificate may be the way forward, but should this mean that pupils do not need to engage with formal style examinations at 16, or should there be a better balance of assessed coursework, with assessment later up the school (Nobody ever leaves the N5 Qualifications and goes straight into Highers, which was an original option for more academic pupils- would this be the same if there was an option age 16 assessment, then a final S6 assessment)? Who will do the assessment though- run in school or by external invigilators? Teachers would have limited time, and study leave is precious to allow teachers preparation for the following year.
3. I think it is important to continue a verification system for children transitioning to employment or further education. This should however take greater cognisance of teachers' professional judgement and not be solely based on assessments, as for some children building a portfolio to demonstrate their depth of learning over time, provides a more valuable measure of understanding than an end of year exam.
4. I think that major reform of the examination process for our young people is long overdue. The mental health issues, loss of teaching, artificial nature- all of these are unfit for purpose. Education seems to sit as a shifting mechanism for Universities - and that is not acceptable.
5. Remove grades-most adults don't like being graded, why do we do it to young people
6. Design assessments that capture whether something has been mastered or not. Universities can re-design their own entrance requirements.
7. Why do we have three years of exams? Why in every subject? It should not be beyond our capabilities to design something new for our young people...one where assessment happens where appropriate...no high stakes exams...where else in life are people expected to be on their own for three hours? What are we testing? Why are we testing it?
8. I know that this would be a major societal reform...but people are ready for it.
9. SQA should be reformed and NOT replaced; it is important to include what was working well previously to build new models and ways of working rather than throwing everything out including former years of good practice; formal assessment as part of certification is essential alongside other forms of continuous assessment.
10. The accreditation and qualification system requires an overhaul to better represent skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for work and further study. It was fit for past generations but not current students or current expectations of employers or academia.
11. There needs to be a local focus which reflects the needs of schools and authorities.