



Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2021

“Learning together in Aberdeenshire”

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Section A - Purpose

- 1. Introduction**

Both globally and nationally it is recognised that parents are the single most important influence on their children's development, learning and achievement. The involvement and engagement of parents in their children's learning is recognised as a key element in raising attainment through support, help and encouragement given at home and whilst at school.

The Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy demonstrates the commitment by Aberdeenshire Council to improve the quality and the extent of all parents' involvement in their child's learning and the important role they play in their child's education.

The plan sets out a vision for parental involvement and engagement for the next three years and covers a journey that a child takes from pre-birth to age 18. It highlights the leadership of those who make the difference day in and day out.

It is based on the guiding aim of Getting it Right for Every Child. It is informed by the central role of the family, whatever form that may take. The theme that lies at the heart of this plan is relationships - relationships based on trust, mutual respect and collaboration.

2. Background

This strategy has been informed by "Learning Together" Scotland's national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021, the findings of the Aberdeenshire Big Conversation 2017 and Aberdeenshire Council priorities 2017-2022 which direct the work of Education and Children's Services.

The specific relevant priorities are work with parents and carers to support children through every stage of their development and provide the best life chances for all our children and young people by raising levels of attainment and achievement.

3. Key Principles

Parental involvement and engagement relies on the principles of trust and collaboration, good conversations and emotional bonds. They serve a purpose and that purpose is to support the learning and development of children and young people.

This strategy is based on three key principles:

- That our priorities and our approach should be guided by the needs and interests of the child/young person and their family.
- That parents are the primary educators of children.
- That it is only through positive relationships – relationships between families, and those working with children and young people, relationships based on trust, mutual respect and partnership - that we will achieve our aims.

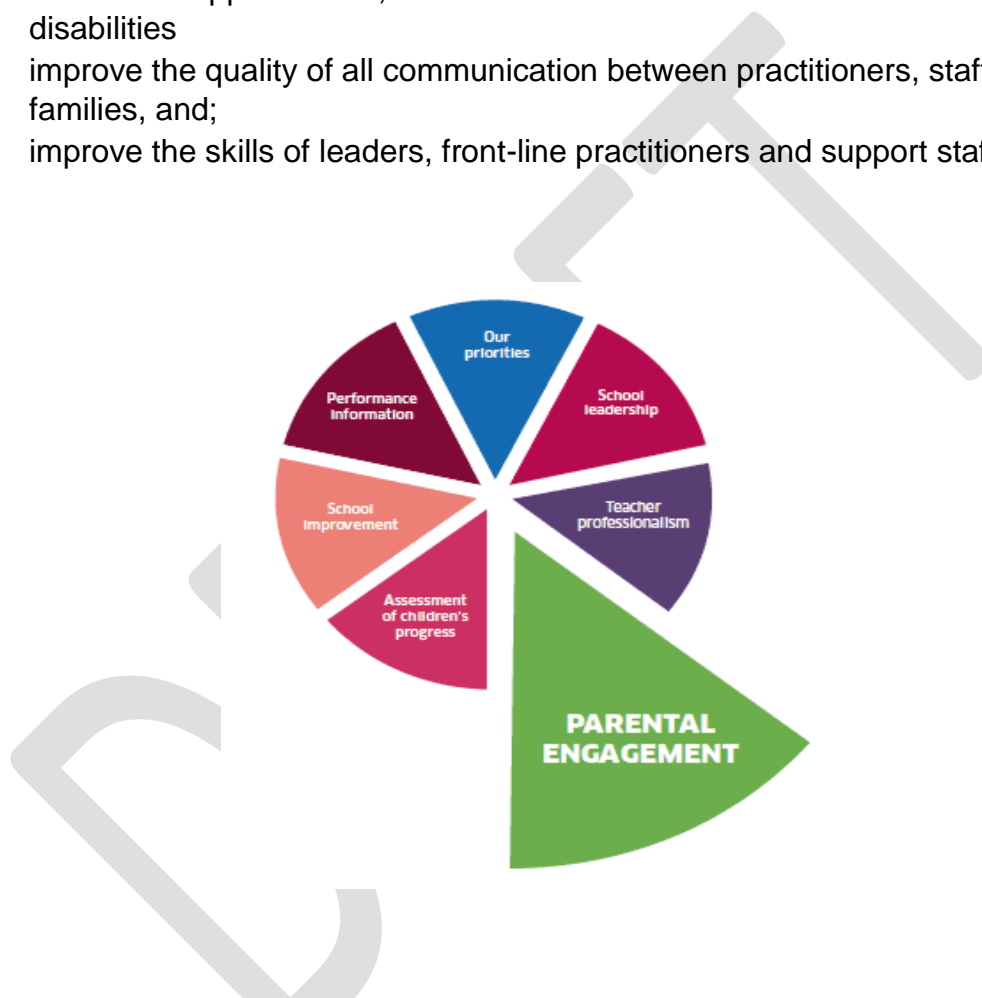
4. Vision, Values and Aims

Aberdeenshire Council will respect and actively seek the views of parents and build a climate of trust by genuine and honest engagement and collaboration to:

- ensure that parents are supported to be fully involved in the life and work of their children’s early learning and childcare setting or school;
- encourage and support collaborative partnerships between practitioners, parents and families;
- get the right support in place so that parents can engage in their child’s learning;

We will:

- expand access to family learning opportunities which meet participants needs
- encourage positive involvement of all parents plus targeted actions aimed at specific groups including ethnic minority parents, parents of children with additional support needs, those with disabled children and those with learning disabilities
- improve the quality of all communication between practitioners, staff, parents and families, and;
- improve the skills of leaders, front-line practitioners and support staff.



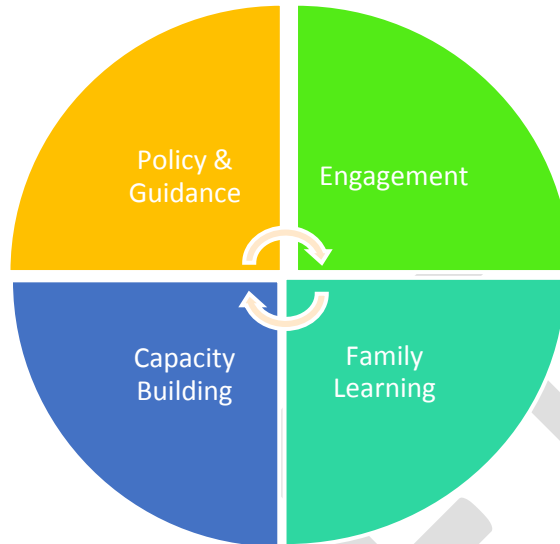
“Parental and family engagement is a key factor in helping all children and young people achieve the highest standards while reducing inequality and closing the attainment gap. Research shows that when parents and carers engage in their children’s learning, and when children and young people live in a supportive home learning environment, it improve children and young people’s attainment and achievement.”

2018 National Improvement Framework

5. Parental Engagement Support Hub Aberdeenshire (PESHA)

The Parental Engagement Support Hub Aberdeenshire is a small team of three officers consisting of a Service Manager, Quality Improvement Officer and an Education Support Officer within Education and Children’s Services whose role and remit focuses on the four key areas shown in the diagram below;

- Policy and Guidance
- Engagement
- Capacity Building
- Family Learning



The Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan will focus on Policy Guidance and Engagement and the Family Learning Delivery Plan will be focused on Policy Guidance and Family Learning.

Capacity Building will be achieved through the implementation of both plans and in particular training for parents and Career Long Professional Learning for practitioners.

The Parental Engagement Support Hub Aberdeenshire (PESHA) team will have overall responsibility for the implementation, delivery and ongoing review of the Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy in collaboration with relevant partners.

The Community Learning and Development team will be responsible for the Family Learning Delivery Plan in collaboration with relevant partners.

6. Parents Charter

A Parents charter is a joint statement which sets out a range of commitments which will underpin our vision, values and aims. The development of an Aberdeenshire Parents' Charter will be undertaken through parent workshops, focus groups and practitioner consultation.

The purpose of the Charter is to clarify roles and responsibilities and to foster collaboration between parents and other stakeholders based on the guiding aim of Getting It Right for Every Child.



7. Consultation Process

Consultation of the draft strategy will be undertaken during November and December 2018 with key stakeholders including parents and families, School Parent Forums via Parent Councils, all school staff, headteachers, practitioners, Early Years and Childcare Forum, Community Learning and Development, Educational Psychology Service, managers, partners and unions.

Consultation with elected members will take place in Area Committee workshops following approval to commence the consultation via the Education and Children's Services Committee. See consultation schedule in Appendix C.

The final draft strategy will be presented with findings to the Education and Children's Services Committee on the 21 March 2019.

8. Addressing Concerns and Complaints

Aberdeenshire Council recognises the vital role that parents play in supporting their child's learning and is committed to fostering positive relationships with parents. No matter how strong partnerships are, or how good our policies are, sometimes things can still go wrong and there may be occasions where parents wish to express unhappiness or dissatisfaction with council services, policies or staff behaviour.

When a complaint is made it must be handled in accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure which provides two opportunities to resolve issues internally. In order to maintain positive relationships, it is usually better for all if parental concerns or complaints can be resolved at school/ early years setting level as quickly as possible.

https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/14581/complaints-procedure-customer_v6.pdf

If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved at frontline resolution (Stage 1) then it will progress to Investigation (Stage 2) and a detailed investigation into the matter will be carried out. Complaints that are complex, serious or high risk and require detailed, lengthy investigation may be dealt with at the Investigation Stage from the outset.

Once the two internal stages of the Complaints Handling procedure have been exhausted, the complainant must be directed to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to carry out an independent external review of the process. The SPSO is the final stage of the complaint procedure.

Once the SPSO reaches a decision they may contact the council with recommendations for improvement and will provide dates by which the recommendations must be implemented. The council is required to report back to the SPSO and evidence that the required action has been taken

Section B – Action Plan

B.1 Parental Involvement

What	Who	How	When	Impact
Goal A - Representation Strengthen parental representation in the life and work of early years and childcare settings and school.	PESHA CLD Schools	Follow up to Big Conversation consultation (Oct 2017)	Nov 2018 Nov 2019 Nov 2020	Improved engagement with parents to identify areas for improvement
	PESHA Northern All colleagues	Audit Northern Alliance CLPL provision on Parental Involvement/Engagement with a view to creating a Northern Alliance CLPL programme	Jan 2019	Sharing of best practice in order to improve training programme
	PESHA	Create PESHA website to allow parents to access support and advice on being involved	Feb 2019	Parents have increased access to support and advice
	PESHA	Review funding formula for Parent Councils. Provide training for Parent Councils and expand to early learning and childcare settings to provide a wider range of opportunities for parents to be involved.	Jan 2019	Effective and transparent use of funding by Parent Councils Funding and training facilitates a wider range of parental involvement
	Elected members	We will explore possibilities for proportionate representation of parents and committee voting rights	Sept 2019	Greater involvement of parents in shaping key policies and budget decisions
Goal B - Collaboration Expand opportunities for ALL parents to collaborate at every level of the education system	PESHA	Liaise and continue to meet on a termly basis with NPFS representative in Aberdeenshire	Aug 2018	Improved collaboration
	CLD and PESHA	Work with parent group in Aberdeenshire to co-design and deliver parent workshops/training in aspects of Parental Engagement and Family Learning	March 2019	Improved parental confidence in supporting their child's learning
	PESHA	In follow up to Big Conversation (2018) create data capture that allows schools to access their school data	Jan 2019	School level improvement in parental engagement
	PESHA	Create self-evaluation tool for schools using "Learning Together"	May 2019	Improved collaboration between parents and schools

What	Who	How	When	Impact
<p>Goal C - Communication</p> <p>Improve communication with parents and families</p>	<p>Information Comms Officer PESHA</p> <p>PESHA with CLD</p> <p>PESHA</p>	<p>Implement actions from review of school handbook to include early learning and childcare settings</p> <p>Produce and promote factsheet for practitioners on how to communicate effectively with parents</p> <p>Set up Aberdeenshire Parent Group and consult with them on policies and strategies and a Parents' Charter</p> <p>Communicate the results of the Big Conversation annually from 2018 to 2020</p>	<p>Sept 2018</p> <p>Feb 2019</p> <p>Nov 2018- June 2019</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>Improved communication channels to reach a wider group of parents</p> <p>Improved communication with parents in school/ early year setting</p> <p>Increased parental participation in policy making</p> <p>Parents feel valued and included</p>
<p>Goal D - Information Technology</p> <p>Support early learning and childcare settings, schools and parents to exploit opportunities provided by IT to improve parental involvement and engagement</p>	<p>PESHA Technical Development Manager</p>	<p>Amend Social Media factsheet to promote opportunities for the use of digital technology in communicating effectively with parents eg Facebook, Twitter and website and how to share learning with parents</p> <p>Use Parental Involvement and Engagement website to promote innovative use of technology in engaging with parents</p>	<p>Feb 2019</p> <p>Feb 2019</p>	<p>Wider range of parents accessing digital technology communication</p> <p>Improved parental awareness and involvement of their child's learning</p>
<p>Goal E - Volunteering</p> <p>Widen opportunities for parents and families to volunteer with the school or early learning and childcare setting</p>	<p>PESHA, Early years, Human resources</p>	<p>Review corporate volunteering strategy to ensure it considers the volunteering needs across schools and early learning and childcare settings</p>	<p>Mar 2019</p>	<p>Children's learning and activities within a school and early years settings will be enhanced by the contribution of volunteers</p>

Measures

- Big Conversation feedback, Feedback on Self Evaluation tool
- Audit of school volunteer numbers, School websites and Twitter feed, Parent Council Feedback

B.2 Parental Engagement, Family Learning and Learning at Home

What	Who	How	When	Impact
<p>Goal F - Parental Engagement</p> <p>Improve support to parents and families to help them engage with their child's learning and development</p>	<p>PESHA, CLD</p> <p>PESHA</p>	<p>Share good practice in Family Learning including innovative use of Pupil Equity Funding through the Parental Involvement and Engagement website</p>	<p>June 2019</p> <p>May 2019</p>	<p>Improved parental involvement in their child's learning and increased awareness of best practice</p> <p>Improved involvement of parents in School Improvement Planning</p>
<p>Goal G - Family Learning</p> <p>Increase the opportunities for families to access evidence based family learning opportunities and programmes</p>	<p>CLD with support from PESHA PESHA and CLD</p>	<p>Develop a Family Learning Delivery plan</p> <p>Deliver and review CLPL on Family Learning to include the following workshops;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Numeracy • English as a Second Other Language • Supporting Parents to Achieve the Best Outcomes for their Children • Supporting Participation in Communities • Developing Knowledge, Skills, Confidence and Resilience 	<p>April 2019</p> <p>Sept 2018- June 2019</p>	<p>Better outcomes for children, young people and families</p> <p>Improved attainment and achievement</p> <p>Parents have improved knowledge and feel more empowered</p>

Measures

- Increased engagement in parental programmes
- Career Long Professional Learning data
- Level of Parental Engagement in School Improvement Plans
- Feedback from self- evaluation tool
- Uptake of Family Learning programmes run by Community Learning and Development and PESHA

B.3 Equalities and Equity

What	Who	How	When	Impact
Goal H - Equalities and Equity Work together to address barriers that limit parents' involvement and engagement to include Minority ethnic groups, Gypsy travellers, Parents of children with ASN, Parents of children and young people with English as an Additional Language, Single parent families.	PESHA	Reflect equalities duties in Parents' Charter and other key strategic documents in collaboration with parents group, CLD, Early Learning team, ASN team, EPS, Learning Estate	2018/19 and ongoing	Increased engagement in equalities and equity training from staff, early learning and childcare settings, schools and Parent Councils
	CLD	Develop a Family Learning Delivery Plan to include considerations to address barriers that limit parents' involvement and engagement	April 2019	Improved outcomes for children, young people and families
	PESHA	Include in Parental Involvement and Engagement website links to relevant support groups	August 2019	Parents feel more supported and informed
	Work with ALISS/ Family Info Service	Work with organisations who can assist in providing advice and support on both equalities and equity to early learning and childcare settings, schools and Parent Councils		Greater awareness of equalities and equity across a wider range of staff
	PESHA, ASN team	Organise and host an event for Parents and Families with Additional Support Needs with a focus on service improvement	June 2019	Increased parental involvement in service planning for children and young people with Additional Support Needs

Measures

- Increased engagement in parental programmes
- Level of parental satisfaction via annual audit at school and local authority level
- Evidence of inclusion of/reference to minority groups in policy and strategy documents to include relevant actions to address inequality

B.4 Leadership and Skills

What	Who	How	When	Impact
Goal J – Skills Enhance the skills associated with parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning amongst practitioners	Educational Psychology Service	CLPL on universal nurture, targeted nurture for practitioners with a rolling programme beginning in secondary schools followed by early years settings	Session 2018-19	Children feeling more supported. Reduced exclusions/ out of authority placements
	PESHA and Aberdeen City Council	ACC and Aberdeenshire to design and trial training for school staff and practitioners in working with parent councils, family learning and improving parental engagement	Mar 2019	Practitioners with improved skills and knowledge
Goal K - Parents as leaders Build the capacity of parents, drawing on their expertise and supporting them to be involved and engaged in their child's learning	PESHA with CONNECT	Provide training for Parent Councils in effective collaboration with schools	Oct 2018	Improved parental knowledge and skills on scope and roles of Parent Councils
		Provide opportunities for Parent Council Chairs to meet formally with senior leaders.	May 2019	Improved communication and engagement
		Provide opportunities for Parent Council Chairs to meet with Parental Engagement Officer	Termly	Greater consistency in best practice between Parent Council and Parent Forum

Measures

- Uptake on CLPL
- Big Conversation data 2018
- Evaluations from Parent Council training sessions
- Attendance at Parent Council Chair meetings
- Attendance at Parent council chair area group meetings
- Educational Psychology Service pre/post audit on Nurture practice in schools

B.5 How Good is Our Strategy?

What	Who	How	When	Impact
Goal L - Ensure that parental involvement and engagement are fully reflected in strategic policies, improvement activity and inspection process	PESHA with Quality Improvement Officers	Highlight self-evaluation tool for schools/early years settings using “Learning Together” to support improvement in Parental Involvement and Engagement	Nov 2018	Improved parental involvement and engagement
	Quality Improvement Managers/ Officers	Support and challenge schools/early years settings to evidence Parental Involvement/Engagement plus innovative use of PEF funding	Jan 2019	Improved results in levels of parental involvement and engagement in inspection reports
Goal M - Improve the evidence base	PESHA	We will prepare and present an annual report on all measures contained within this strategy	Mar 2020	Clear evidence of effectiveness of strategy
Goal N - Provide funding for parental involvement at authority level	PESHA	Link funding for Parent Councils to expectation that there is improved engagement with the wider parent forum	Sept 2018	Parent council constitutions reflect improved levels of parental engagement and involvement

Measures

- Big Conversation 2017 and 2018
- Inspection reports
- Annual report on Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy implementation and measures
- Parent Council constitutions

Appendix A – Definitions/Glossary

ALISS: A Learning Information Service for Scotland

ASN: Additional Support Needs

Child/Children: When the plan refers to “children” or “child” it means a person under the age of 18.

CLPL: Career Long Professional Learning The term refers to professional learning and development for teachers and practitioners in schools, early years settings and Community Learning and Development.

CLD: Community Learning and Development

EAL: English as an Additional Language

Family Learning: Family learning encourages family members to learn together as and within a family, with a focus on intergenerational learning. Family learning activities can also be designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children’s learning. ‘Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage’ (Scottish Family Learning Network, 2016)

Learning at Home: Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities.

Parent/s: The term “parents” means anyone with parental responsibilities and others who care for or look after children or young people. The plan acknowledges that individual family units will comprise a wider range of people who might also contribute to a child’s learning at home experiences. Although the plan is titled a ‘parental’ involvement and engagement plan, there are a wide variety of parenting roles. The plan recognises the important role of grandparents, kinship carers, foster parents, wider family (uncles, aunts, cousins) and separated parents. The term “parents” and “parents and carers” are therefore used interchangeably throughout this plan.

Parental Engagement: Parental engagement is about parents’ and families’ interaction with their child’s learning. It can take place in the home, at school or in the community. Where it takes place is not important. The important thing is the quality of the parent’s engagement with their child’s learning, the positive impact that it can have and the interaction and mutual development that can occur as a result of that interaction.

PESHA: Parental Engagement and Support Hub Aberdeenshire is a small team consisting of a Quality Improvement Officer and Education Support Officer who report to a Quality Improvement Manager who have dedicated roles to take forward parental involvement and engagement in an effective a co-ordinated way across the local authority. They promote and encourage parental involvement and engagement and family learning through multi-agency meetings and work in partnership with the local National Parent Forum of Scotland representative and other parents. They also support Parent Councils, parents, practitioners

and leaders with a program of training and information and work collaboratively with the Feedback team with regard to complaint handling.

Parental Involvement: Parental involvement describes the ways in which parents can get involved in the life and work of the early learning and childcare setting or school or the ways that parents can get involved in “schooling”. Parental involvement includes activities such as parental representation in the development of policies, improvement plans and key decisions. It can include involvement in the life and work of the establishment, for instance through volunteering opportunities. Parental involvement can also include help with homework or keeping track of children’s work and on-going, two-way communication between home and school or early learning and childcare setting.

NPFS: National Parent Forum Scotland. The Forum works in partnership with national and local government and other organisations involved in education and child wellbeing issues to ensure that parents play a full and equal role in education. The overall aim is to help every child to maximise their potential through their school life.

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Appendix B - Legislation, Guidance, Support and Advice

[Building the Ambition: National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare and the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

[Pre-Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families](#)

[How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?](#)

Scottish Government's [National Improvement Framework](#) for education

[Statutory guidance](#) (2007) on the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

Scottish Government (2012) [School Handbook Guidance](#)

Education Scotland's [Family Learning Framework](#), available on the National Improvement Hub

Education Scotland (2016) [Review of Family Learning](#)

Education Scotland's [Engaging Parents and Families toolkit](#)

[Education Scotland – What is Parental Involvement and Parental Engagement?](#)

[Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit](#)

[How Good is Our School? \(fourth edition\)](#)

[How Dad Friendly is Our School \(Fathers Network Scotland\)](#)

[Helping Children Learn - Involving non-resident parents in their children's education](#) (Children in Scotland and Families Need Fathers)

Advice and support for parents and families

[Connect](#) (formally known as the Scottish Parent Teacher Council) – advice on Parent Councils.

[Enquire](#) - Scotland's advice service for additional support for learning. Enquire's mission is to raise awareness of children's rights to extra support in school, help families and schools work together to ensure children get the support they need and provide advice to children and young people who might be struggling in school.

[My World of Work, Parent advice](#) – Advice and support to parents when their child is making decisions about their career.

[National Parent Forum of Scotland](#) – website includes a wide range of "Nutshell" advice guides on Scottish education, qualifications and reform programmes.

[Parentzone Scotland](#) - website for parents and carers in Scotland, from early years to beyond school providing information about learning in Scotland, and practical advice and ideas to support children's learning at home in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and science.

[Parent Club](#) - practical advice for parents covering a range of themes including, hints and tips on engaging with your child's learning from 0-5.

[Parenting Across Scotland](#) offers support to children and families in Scotland.

[Read, Write, Count](#) – for parents of children in P1 – P3, providing practical advice to support your child's literacy and numeracy skills.

Scottish Government (2009) [Guide to Parents About School Attendance](#).

Scottish Government (2010) [A guide for parents on choosing a school and the placing request](#) system.

Scottish Qualifications Authority, [Advice to Parents and Carers](#)

Research and Analysis

Aston, H. and Grayson, H (2013), Teacher Guide: Parental Engagement and Narrowing the Gap in Attainment for Disadvantaged Children
<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OUPP02/OUPP02.pdf>

Clapton, G 2017, 'Good practice with fathers in children and family services', pp. 1-16, Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS), 30 08 June.
https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/files/45742312/Clapton_IRISS_2017_INSIGHTS38.pdf

Desforges, C. and Abouchar, A. (2003), The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review. Research report RR433.
www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_impact_of_parental_involvement.pdf

Education Endowment Foundation (2016), Parental Engagement – Toolkit
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/school-themes/parental-engagement/>

Ellis, S. and Sosu, E. (2014), *Closing the Attainment Gap in Scottish Education*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. University of Strathclyde.
www.jrf.org.uk/report/closing-attainment-gap-scottish-education

For further research and analysis go to <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00539357.pdf>
P44-46

Appendix C - Schedule of Consultation for Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy

Group to be consulted	Method	Week beg. 29 Oct	Week beg. 5 Nov	Week beg. 12 Nov	Week beg. 19 Nov	Week beg. 26 Nov	Week beg. 3 Dec			
Parent Forum via Parent Councils	Online survey									
Parent Councils	Online survey									
Head teachers, teachers and practitioners	Online survey									
*Syrian New Scots via Syrian Refugee Resettlement Co-ordinator	Targeted event									
Area Committees	Consultation with elected members	Formartine 30.10.18	Banff and Buchan 6.11.18	Buchan 13.11.18	K & Mearns 20.11 18	Marr 27.11.18	Garioch 4.12.18			
Parents of pupils with Additional Support Needs	Targeted events x 9 Comm. Resource Hubs	Ellon 31 Oct	Banff 5 Nov	Westfield 7 Nov	Anna Ritchie 14 Nov	Carronhill 19 Nov	Aboyne 26 Nov	Alford 28 Nov	St Andrews 3 Dec	TGS Huntly 5 Dec
*Parents of English as an Additional Language pupils	Targeted events in identified schools									
*Parents of children at Early Years Settings and Childcare Providers	Targeted events/online survey through Family Information Service									
Parents of children and young people (home educated)	Online survey									
Open consultation events, daytime and evening	Presentation and workshop	Ellon Ac 30 Oct	Banff Academy 6 Nov	Peterhead Ac 14 Nov	Portlethen Ac 20 Nov	Aboyne Ac 27 Nov	Inverurie Academy 4 Dec			
Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT)	Consultation/meeting					Thur 29 Nov				
Aberdeenshire Secondary HTs Association (ASHTA)	Consultation/meeting	Friday 2 Nov								
Primary HTs Association (PHTC)	Consultation/meeting			Fri 16 Nov						

* Dates to be confirmed