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Director of Education

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Dear

SUPPORT FOR CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE 2011/12

I am writing to highlight some additional aspects of national support for the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence which will be provided over the coming year, through Education Scotland working in close partnership with the SQA and local authorities. In particular, I wanted to advise you on how we are taking forward a number of specific actions (highlighted in italics below) which the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning announced at the Scottish Learning Festival on 21 September 2011. The full range of these additional activities is described [here](#).

This letter also describes the contingency arrangements which have been agreed by the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board for any departments which, due to exceptional circumstances, may not be ready to move to National 4 and 5 in 2013/14 and it contains information about some changes to the national arrangements for managing support for the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

1. Generic Support

1.1 Events to promote detailed understanding of the new Qualifications

SQA and Education Scotland are working together on the plans to support the introduction of the new qualifications.

The joint activities described below will supplement SQA's planned programme of support, including over 300 implementation events, covering every subject area, which SQA will offer around the country from May 2012 when the detail of the new qualifications will be in place.

In December, SQA and Education Scotland will hold events in every curriculum area to discuss the detail of draft qualifications with teachers and hear their views.

Seven curriculum area events and an event for Access 1 and 2 will take place between 29 November and 13 December and each local authority will be allocated places based on the number of schools they have. Independent schools and colleges will be invited to send one nominee to each event.

The programme will include the latest information, directly from the developers, on the development of the qualifications. There will be a session looking at progression from the experiences and outcomes into and through the levels of the qualifications. This will enable practitioners to consider, in some depth, pathways for all learners through the senior phase, building on what young people have learned in their broad general education from S1 to S3. This will support practitioners in planning their S3 programmes for session 2012/13. There will also be an opportunity for practitioners to feed in their views on the new qualifications and support required for implementation.

The approaches and workshop activities for these events will be made available to all teachers to support their own planning and professional dialogue with their colleagues.

SQA will write shortly with further details and information about these events.

1.2 Support for curriculum planning

Education Scotland will work in partnership with local authorities to agree further support for the primary school sector, where this is needed to support their delivery of the curriculum, including in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

This will build on the partnership support programme carried out in the autumn 2010, but will be on a smaller scale and will have an emphasis on the primary sector.

District Inspectors and Area Advisers will continue to engage with local authorities to identify priority areas for support, based upon self evaluation, and agree activities in line with available resources. This support work will begin in the early part of 2012.

1.3 Support for Profiling at P7

Education Scotland has now published advice on profiling young people's key achievements in P7. The new [Profiling Section](#) provides information about profiling, examples of emerging practice and case studies which explain the thinking behind the development of the materials and lessons learned so far. We hope that this new

resource will assist teachers as they work with the current P7 learners to develop their profile for next June.

2. Targeted support

With SQA and local authorities, we will be monitoring progress towards implementation of the new qualifications carefully. Any secondary school, in agreement with its local authority, which identifies a department needing help to prepare for the new qualifications will get support from a team of subject and qualification experts, co-ordinated by Education Scotland.

The starting-point for determining whether additional support may be required will be schools' self-evaluation of the readiness of their departments and subsequent discussions with local authorities. Education Scotland and SQA will work in close partnership with the local authority to identify what further support may be necessary beyond that which is already planned by the SQA, and agree how to address this through appropriate, coordinated capacity building. This will build upon the processes developed through the partnership support programme of autumn 2010. As part of this, and within available resources, further targeted support may be agreed and provided or commissioned by Education Scotland and the local authority.

From April 2012, or as soon as practicable thereafter, the scope of any necessary, more targeted, work with individual departments will also be assessed through the evaluation and engagement process described above. For those departments where it is agreed that, in the absence of further support, the department will not be ready to deliver the new qualifications for 2013/14, plans would be developed in collaboration with local authorities and the schools to assess the risks and benefits of introducing new qualifications or invoking the contingency arrangements (see below).

Agreed support might involve contact with a neighbouring department, enabling access to SQA's and Education Scotland's support materials, and/or professional dialogue involving curriculum specialists, for example on progression from the broad general education and the experiences and outcomes.

3. Contingency arrangements for the New Qualifications

The Curriculum for Excellence Management Board has agreed contingency arrangements, for one year only, for the very exceptional circumstances where a department is not ready to introduce the new national qualifications, National 4 and 5, for certification in 2013/14. These arrangements should only be considered where the targeted support arrangements described under 2 above, have been implemented but a department is not ready. Should the school, with the support of the Local Authority and, if appropriate, Education Scotland, consider that it is in the best interest of learners they can be presented for the relevant Intermediate

qualification rather than the new qualification. This must be with the authorisation of the Director of Education and, given the range of support, it is anticipated that there will be very few occasions where it will be necessary to invoke these contingency arrangements.

4. Establishment of a new Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Group

One of the key strands of the remit given to Education Scotland by the Cabinet Secretary on its creation was '*to lead and support implementation of Curriculum for Excellence*'. The Curriculum for Excellence Management Board discussed the implications of Education Scotland taking on this role at its last meeting and we agreed the following:

- That I should now establish a new Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Group, which I will Chair, and which will bring together the key bodies with a key role in implementation. This will comprise representatives of all those with responsibility for the safe delivery of CfE, including representatives of the Directors of Education (through ADES), SQA and Scottish Government. This Group will meet quarterly.
- The CfE Management Board will retain overall oversight of the Curriculum for Excellence programme. The Implementation Group will report to the Board on progress; on risks to successful implementation and will bring forward issues for consideration. It will continue to be chaired by Sarah Smith, Director of Learning, Scottish Government who will report to Scottish Ministers on the progress of Curriculum for Excellence.

I think these new arrangements appropriately reflect the stage we are at in the overall process of implementing the curricular reform programme, whilst still ensuring all stakeholders all have the opportunity to be engaged at the right level.

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in schools, centres and partners in the next stage of implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, to improve learners' experiences and raise the attainment of all children and young people.

Yours sincerely



Dr Bill Maxwell
Transitional Chief Executive