

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 4 March 2014

Implementation of new Higher qualifications

Item number	7.6
Report number	
Wards	All

Links

Coalition pledges	P5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

Contact: Karen Prophet, Senior Education Manager (Quality and Curriculum)

E-mail: Karen.Prophet@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3048

Executive summary

Implementation of new Higher qualifications

Summary

Further to the Education, Children and Families Committee meeting on 10 December 2013 the Educational Attainment/Improvements in Performance report was approved, along with various amendments, regarding the implementation of the new Highers from session 2014-15 and by session 2015-16. Recommendation 5 in this report was to note the position with regard to the implementation of the new Higher qualifications and to agree to receive a further report on this issue in March 2014. In January 2014 the LNCT agreement was signed which is based on a rationale of additional flexibility and a copy of this agreement is filed in appendix one.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the position with regard to the implementation of new Higher qualifications as outlined in the LNCT Agreement dated 22 January 2014.
2. Note that we will monitor the progress of the implementation of the new qualifications and that a further update will be provided within the Educational Attainment/Improvements in Performance report in December 2014.

Measures of success

Based on a range of evidence:

- Successful implementation of the new Higher Qualifications in line with the LNCT Agreement dated 22 January 2014.

Financial impact

£64,000 from the Scottish Government has been transferred to all secondary presenting centres to support the introduction of the new qualifications including national qualifications and the new Highers.

The City of Edinburgh Council has matched the Scottish Government funding by transferring £64,000 to all secondary presenting centres to support the introduction of the new Highers.

£36,000 from the City of Edinburgh Council will be assigned to produce curriculum and assessment resources across all subject areas.

An additional Scottish Government package was announced on Friday 21 February 2014, including £4.75m funding to local authorities and £250K to local authorities specifically for parental engagement.

Equalities impact

There are considered to be no infringements of the rights of the child.

Sustainability impact

None.

Consultation and engagement

Consultation and engagement took place with Secondary School Head Teachers and the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) and the LNCT agreement, based on the rationale for additional flexibility, was signed on 22 January 2014. A copy of this agreement is filed in appendix one of this report.

Background reading / external references

[Educational Attainment/Improvements in Performance](#) Report submitted to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 10 December 2013:

Implementation of new Higher qualifications

1. Background

- 1.1 Further to the Education, Children and Families Committee meeting which took place on 10 December 2013 the Educational Attainment/Improvements in Performance report was approved, along with various amendments, regarding the implementation of the new Highers from session 2014-15 and by session 2015-16.
- 1.2 Recommendation 5 in this report was to note the position with regard to the implementation of the new Higher qualifications and to agree to receive a further report on this issue in March 2014.
- 1.3 In January 2014 the LNCT agreement was signed which is based on a rationale of additional flexibility and a copy of this agreement is filed in appendix one.
- 1.4 This report also outlines the additional support which has been put in place to assist with the on-going implementation of the new qualifications.

2. Main report

- 2.1 All S4 pupils, from session 2013-14 are following courses leading to the new National qualifications. In secondary schools, all young people will be presented for the following qualifications: National 3, 4 or 5. These qualifications replace Standard Grade and Intermediate 2 qualifications.
- 2.2 From session 2014-2015, new Higher qualifications will be introduced. The 'old' Higher will also continue to be offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority for session 2014/15 and will be phased out after this session. The reason for dual running is to allow for current S5 pupils, who will be in S6 in session 2014-2015, to continue with a suite of qualifications which build on Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications rather than the new national qualifications.
- 2.3 The National Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan outlines the timescale for implementation of new Higher courses in session 2014-2015 and a recent communication from Education Scotland outlines the expectation that all schools offer new Higher courses building on new national qualifications for the S5 cohort.
- 2.4 At the Education, Children and Families Committee on 8 October 2013, a motion was passed which requested that officers bring back further information on

schools readiness to introduce new Higher courses and that solutions were also identified to overcome any issues.

- 2.5 At the Education, Children and Families Committee meeting on 10 December 2013 the Educational Attainment/Improvements in Performance report was approved, along with various amendments, regarding the implementation of the new Highers from session 2014-15 and by session 2015-16. The following commitment in section 2.66 of this report highlighted that a more detailed account of decisions regarding presentation in Higher will be reported to the Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2014.

Support for the on-going implementation of the new qualifications

- 2.6 The Scottish Qualifications Authority has already begun a series of Higher Implementation events for each subject area and these will run until March 2014 and there is on-going consultation with Curriculum Leaders and Head Teachers in each secondary school to establish readiness to implement the new Higher next session. Head Teachers are fully supportive of the implementation of new qualifications as part of Curriculum for Excellence. They recommend that we continue to expect Higher courses to be implemented except where there is a sound rationale for additional flexibility, agreed by the Head Teacher and the local authority in line with the LNCT agreement which was signed on 22 January 2014. A copy of this agreement is filed in appendix one.
- 2.7 Head Teachers recommend that in any major curriculum change, there is a transition period and that the overriding principle should be that staff are confident in the delivery of new courses to ensure that pupils have the best educational experience possible and it is important to note that the standard of the 'old' Higher and the new Higher is the same and therefore the value of either of the qualifications is considered by universities to be the same.
- 2.8 The City of Edinburgh Council's Quality Improvement Team have provided extensive curriculum support both in the form of materials and in the form of professional development across the whole introduction of Curriculum for Excellence 3-18.
- 2.9 In session 2012-2013, to support the introduction of the new national qualifications, teams of staff developed course materials which were shared across all of our schools and contributed to the national pool of teaching resources. Additional money was given by the Scottish Government where the City of Edinburgh Council received £215K which was directly given to schools. In addition, £50K was identified within our own budgets to support additional central curriculum development.
- 2.10 In session 2013-2014, £64,000 which was received from the Scottish Government has been transferred to all secondary presenting centres to support

the introduction of the new qualifications including national qualifications and the new Highers.

- 2.11 In addition, £64,000 from the City of Edinburgh Council has been transferred to all secondary presenting centres to support the introduction of the new Highers.
- 2.12 In order to produce curriculum and assessment resources a further £36,000 additional funding from the City of Edinburgh Council has been assigned to support teams of staff to develop course materials which will be shared across all of our schools and will also contribute to the national pool of teaching resources.
- 2.13 In addition, through discussions with ADES, Education Scotland and the SQA, each local authority will receive additional support through increased professional development activities: <http://mailer.sqa.org.uk/implementing-national-qualifications-additional-support-for-teachers/2013/29/11/acce0a86-00f2-42cf-8eed-a29100a6686d>
- 2.14 In January 2014, the LNCT agreement was signed which agreed a position of additional flexibility and this is filed in appendix 1. The rationale for additional flexibility outlines that the introduction of the new Higher courses, following on from the implementation of National Qualifications for the current S4, is encouraged on the principle that this aims to provide coherence for the S5 learner. However, it is recognised that concerns have been raised and we have agreed a position of additional flexibility in the context of ensuring that we deliver the best possible outcomes for young people. As outlined in the LNCT agreement dated 22 January 2014, the professional issues are areas which could be considered appropriate in terms of a rationale for additional flexibility are: concerns about SQA (specific concerns should be explained), capacity within the department and/or school, Resources e.g. course materials, practice assessment materials for staff and pupil familiarisation.
- 2.15 Although initial indications may already have been given by staff regarding a department's intentions, discussions will continue between now and the end of March as further information/support become available and all schools will ensure that parents of pupils currently in S4 and S5 are consulted by March 2014 on the school's plans for the introduction of new Highers.
- 2.16 As outlined in the LNCT agreement dated 22 January 2014, final decisions taken by schools on the implementation of the new Higher qualifications will be agreed with the authority by the end of March 2014 once all of the SQA Higher implementation events have taken place.
- 2.17 The additional package of support for the introduction of new Higher qualifications from the Scottish Government, also includes an additional in-service day in session 2014/15, a modified approach to verification which is carried out by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and additional support for assessment through the creation of new "route maps" to support teachers.

3. Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- 3.1. Note the position with regard to the implementation of new Higher qualifications as outlined in the LNCT Agreement dated 22 January 2014.
- 3.2. Note that we will monitor the progress of the implementation of the new qualifications and that a further update will be provided within the Educational Attainment/Improvements in Performance report in December 2014.

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

Links

Coalition pledges	P5. Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum
Council outcomes	CO2. Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities.
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
Appendices	1. LNCT Agreement dated 22 January 2014



LNCT Statement

Implementation of New CfE Highers

At the meeting of the City of Edinburgh Council Education Children and Families Committee on Dec 10th 2013, a report was approved, along with various amendments, regarding Secondary Schools' decisions around implementing the New CfE Highers from session 2014-15 and by session 2015-16. In line with one of the approved amendments to the report, discussions have been held at the LNCT regarding the drafting of a clear statement about the factors to be taken into account by Head Teachers, Curriculum leaders and teachers when providing a sound rationale for seeking a delay of one year in implementing any subject's New CfE Higher.

It is the purpose of this communication to make that clear statement.

Rationale for additional flexibility

The introduction of new Higher courses following on from the implementation of National Qualifications for the current S4 is encouraged on the principle that this aims to provide coherence for the S5 learner.

It is recognised, however, that concerns have been raised and we have agreed a position of additional flexibility in the context of ensuring that we deliver the best possible outcomes for young people.

The following professional issues are areas which could be considered appropriate in terms of a rationale for additional flexibility.

- Concerns about SQA (specific concerns should be explained).
- Capacity within the department and/or school.
- Resources e.g. course materials, practice assessment materials for staff and pupil familiarisation.

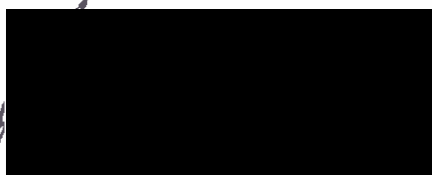
Staff should note that, although initial indications may already have been given regarding a department's intentions, discussions will continue between now and the end of March as further information/support become available. By the February holiday, details of the planned city wide implementation of new Highers will inform a report to be taken to the Education, Children & Families Committee in March 2014. Final decisions taken by schools will be agreed with the authority by the end of March.

Support

- SQA - Significant additional support is being provided by SQA in response to issues raised: <http://mailer.sqa.org.uk/implementing-national-qualifications-additional-support-for-teachers/2013/29/11/acce0a86-00f2-42cf-8eed-a29100a6686d>
- Further National support materials.
- Funding from Scottish Government to support the introduction of new qualifications including Nationals and new Highers (£64K to Edinburgh which will all be distributed to all secondary presenting centres).
- Funding from the City of Edinburgh to support the introduction of new Highers (£64K directly to all secondary presenting centres).
- Additional funding of £36K from the City of Edinburgh to produce curriculum and assessment resources across all subject areas.

The members of the LNCT wish to thank all staff for their ongoing commitment and professionalism in their work to provide the best experiences for their learners.

Signed:



Management Side

Signed:



Teachers' Side

22 January 2014