

Annual engagement report 2025–26



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Foreword



I'm delighted to publish our first annual report on engagement.

Over the past year, we have placed engagement at the heart of everything we do. This report reflects our renewed focus on listening, collaborating, and building relationships that enable us to deliver better outcomes for the learners of Scotland.

A key milestone in this journey has been the creation of our School Partnership Team. Their work will bring us closer to the classroom by building trust and collaboration with the education and skills community — ensuring that voices are not only heard but actively shape decisions and priorities.

Alongside this, we have made significant progress in developing our Corporate Plan. This plan sets out a clear direction for the future, grounded in evidence, insight, and engagement. It reflects both our ambitions as an organisation and the expectations of our stakeholders, providing a framework that will guide our actions and measures of success in the years ahead.

Underpinning all of this is our firm commitment to transformation and change. We recognise that strengthening engagement is not a single initiative but part of a broader cultural shift — one that requires openness, adaptability, and continuous improvement. By embedding engagement into how we plan, deliver, and evaluate our work, we are building an organisation that is more responsive, resilient, and ready for the future.

This report highlights the progress we have made, the lessons we have learned, and the opportunities that lie ahead as we continue this important journey. Our success will ultimately be judged not by our own assessment, but by the experiences and feedback of those we engage with.



John Booth
Chief Strategy Officer

Our year in numbers

Liaison Team

- ✓ Scottish Council of Independent Schools event in person, **35 attendees**
- ✓ Local authority event, **22 attended** online event
- ✓ Highlands event, jointly hosted by local authorities and SQA, all **33 SQA Co-ordinators attending**

Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements webinars from June - Dec 2025

4x Intro to updates guidance

3x Quality teacher commentary

2x Evidence for extra time

192

participants

80

participants

60

participants

532

Engagements



(4,378 staff engaged)

280 face-to-face (2,994 people)

252 online (1,384 people)

Shaping our future

Online events feedback about proposed corporate plan.



13

events



200

practitioners

Visits relating specifically to Assessment Arrangements

105

Engagements
(1,330 people)

33

of these were virtual with
223 people attending

72

in person with
1,107 people

Learner and Parent



Parent webinar with over

550

registrations



Facilitated workshops with

140

learners

Visited **9 schools** and **7 local authority** areas

Facilitated workshops for Scottish Government's engagement with SYP, Young Scot, Children's Parliament and Children in Scotland – included **70** learners.

School Partnership Team

7

sessions with teachers and school leaders

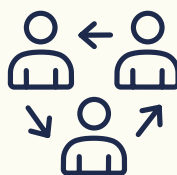
7

schools visits (senior leaders, teachers, learners and qualification co-ordinators)

9

stakeholder events/meetings including, but not limited to, SCQF Ambassadors, School Leaders Scotland, Building on Collaborations, Supporting Headteachers, Centre for Teaching Excellence.

Regional Managers



Supported more than **840 centres** Scotland wide including schools, colleges, local education authorities, employers and training providers.



Over the last year the team have had over **1,200** engagements with existing and new customers.



Business Development Consultants have contacted approximately **400** smaller employer and training providers.

Chief Executive has

Met with **216** school leaders,
including primary school teachers.



Visited **40** schools
across Scotland and Islands.

Spoken with several **100** learners.



Visited **11** Local Authorities.

Spoken with all
College Principals.



Spoken with over **73** businesses.



Our new Chief Executive

Our Chief Executive, Nick Page, has made lots of visits with schools, colleges, local authorities, employers and training providers across Scotland. He's clear that we are a new organisation, designed from the ground up to work differently, to engage more deeply, and to put learners and educators at the very heart of everything we do.

His engagement offers genuine opportunities for everyone to get involved in our work, allowing teachers, lecturers, learners, parents, carers, local authorities, system experts and employers to tell us about what matters to them and what needs to change.

One recent example was his visit to the [Highlands and Islands](#), reflecting our ambitions of being open, collaborative and forward-thinking, and to ensure that the voices of learners and educators from all parts of Scotland shape the future of qualifications.

Corporate Plan

Our priorities for the next three years were shaped through extensive engagement, both inside our organisation and with the stakeholders we work with. Listening to what people told us they want to see from Scotland's qualifications system has helped us to identify the activity and priorities that matter most throughout 2026–29. We engaged with many stakeholders — including learners, educators, parents and carers — to hear from them first-hand about their aspirations for Qualifications Scotland.

Combining all this feedback with an evidence-based approach, our Corporate Plan is ambitious and transformative — raising the bar to achieve excellence, drive innovation and create lasting impact that redefines how we will deliver qualifications for Scotland.

Stakeholders consulted



Your feedback helped shape our Corporate Plan for 2026–29. We called this our ‘You said, We did’ approach.

You said...we did

- 1 You said you wanted to see alignment to the broader education and skills system.**
We have made the links to our work with partners more visible and aligned to national priorities including the National Improvement Framework for Education.
- 2 You wanted to see a stronger ambition, but being realistic in terms of capacity and funding.**
We strengthened the ambition in our themes of qualification reform and organisational excellence.
- 3 You wanted it to be easier to see the different ways you can provide feedback (and how we respond to it).**
We have ensured this is a central ambition in our corporate plan.
- 4 You wanted enhanced digital services, though recognising any wider system implications.**
We have committed to co-design of our services to ensure that feedback from our stakeholders and accessibility needs are built in.



Exam Timetable Advisory Group

Our Exam Timetable Advisory Group brings together 34 participants from unions, parent groups, learners, SCIS, ADES, SLS, head teachers, and co-ordinators from colleges, independent schools and local authorities. Meetings are held both online and face-to-face to collaborate and develop the exam timetable each year.

Following feedback, we invited learners, teachers, lecturers and other stakeholders to help shape the 2027 National Qualifications exam timetable — giving them more direct input into the process than ever before. We've used their responses to inform the final timetable.

Assessment Arrangements

We carried out research on the quality assurance of assessment arrangements (QA of AA) between October 2024 and January 2025 ([research report published May 2025](#)) as a follow-up to the [assessment arrangements research we published in November 2024](#). The research was carried out with schools and colleges as participants — one of the recommendations from our AA research was to review and make improvements to our current quality assurance process. As a result of the research findings from the 2025 report, we made the following changes:

- We no longer require colleges and training providers to be sampled as part of QA of AA visits. We now monitor compliance with our QA of AA requirements as part of our systems verification activity.
- We've published updated guidance to clarify evidence requirements to support assessment arrangement requests for schools.
- We put QA of AA visits on hold during the period of implementation from August 2025 to July 2026 so we could tell all schools about the change. Our Liaison Team has also been delivering webinars to help schools understand what this change means for them, and to offer support.
- We'll start QA of AA visits again from August 2026 using the new criteria.

Qualifications reform

As part of qualifications reform, we are progressing with improvements to some of our current National Courses, based on feedback from educators and learners. We're making changes to improve assessments and to support learners before reformed National Courses are introduced.

We launched a survey to gather views on some proposed changes to assessments in a selection of courses from National 5 to Advanced Higher level. Our proposed changes included reducing the length of exam papers and the number of marks available, giving learners more time to complete an exam, and clarifying the volume of evidence that learners need to produce for an assessment. These changes will improve the assessments and reduce the time learners spend working on assessments.

Over 1200 learners and over 2500 educators responded to our survey. The feedback gathered has helped us decide if we should make these changes and, if so, how soon we should make them.



Equalities and Children's Rights

Our Equality Outcomes are central to our commitment to advancing equality of opportunity and our promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion. They support our transition to Qualifications Scotland and help us fulfil our obligations as a public body under our Public Sector Equality Duty.

We asked schools, colleges, training providers, employers, learners, parents and carers, equality groups and other stakeholders, to help us shape our outcomes and priorities and ensure they are fit for purpose. We wanted to ensure our equality outcomes aligned with the key equality issues that our stakeholders expect us to focus on.

We consulted with our stakeholders, analysed the responses and used them to shape our final draft Equality Outcomes 2025–29. We also used the feedback from the consultation to develop the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Qualifications Scotland.

Our Equality and Diversity team work with colleagues and partners to ensure that we involve diverse groups of people, and that we act on their feedback. The team continues to monitor feedback and enquiries from learners, practitioners, and equality and inclusion partners, to identify trends and potential improvements to the guidance and information we provide.

We also collaborate with our partners in education to improve outcomes for children and young people and care-experienced people who are impacted by poverty.

As part of our commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), we undertake Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments when considering any changes to our policies, strategies or services. This requires us to consider their likely impact on children. We follow the **guidance and template** set by the Scottish Government to ensure we accurately record and reflect on the voice of children and young people in our decision-making.

Corporate Parenting

Qualifications Scotland is a proud Corporate Parent, and we want care-experienced learners to fulfil their potential. To do this, we need to consider their needs and make a positive impact where we can. We work closely with Who Cares? Scotland to hear directly from care-experienced learners and understand what matters to them.

You said...we did

- 1 You said you wanted us to support Who Cares? Scotland's Lifelong Rights Campaign.**

We recognise the long-lasting consequences that being in care can have into adulthood, and have removed the age cap on our free Replacement Certificate Service to care-experienced people.
- 2 You said you wanted us to help raise awareness about the impact of care experience.**

We helped develop the Care Experience and Corporate Parenting guide for teachers. This provides Scotland's teachers with insight into the lives of care-experienced learners and the important role teachers play as corporate parents.

We launched Who Cares? Scotland's Care Experience and Corporate Parenting training to all staff. The training is also included in our new employee induction programme for Qualifications Scotland.
- 3 You said you wanted us to consider care experience as a protected characteristic.**

We have committed, in our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26, to ensuring the voice of care-experienced people is at the heart of our decision-making. We achieve this by using our Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process to monitor and evaluate the impact of our policies and practices for care-experienced people.

Scottish set text list for English courses

We published a new list of Scottish set texts for National 5 and Higher English courses. This follows an extensive consultation that heard the views of teachers, learners, and literary experts from across the country.

Highlights:

- **First-ever inclusion of learners' views** in the Scottish set texts consultation process.
- **More than 2,500 responses** received from teachers and learners.
- **New titles added** to the list, including Ely Percy's *Duck Feet*, the play *Sequamur* by Donald S Murray, and works by Jenni Fagan, poets Imtiaz Dharker and Kathleen Jamie, and playwright David Greig.
- **Increased diversity**, with more writers of colour, female writers, LGBTQ+ writers, and authors from a wide range of backgrounds.
- **Implementation from the 2025–26 session**, with first assessments in 2026.



This is the first review and update of the Scottish set text list since 2018 and rightly it was an opportunity to consider the titles on it and assess how teachers and learners engage with these works and see if and where any changes were necessary.

The feedback we received was clear. Teachers and lecturers wanted to retain the most popular texts, but they also wanted a list that is diverse, and relevant for learners. They wanted us to include more writers of colour, more female writers, more LGBTQ+ writers, and writers from a variety of backgrounds. From learners we heard them say they wanted to see more modern and diverse texts that had challenging themes and strong emotional content included in the revised list.



Robert Quinn

Head of English, Languages and Business

Our work with learners

Over the last year we ran workshops with learners in schools to map the learner journey, better understand their information and support needs throughout the academic year, and hear learner views on a variety of topics for Qualifications Scotland to consider now and in the future.

You said...we did

1 **You said you wanted clear communications about National Qualifications in a timely and accessible way.**

We have reduced the word-count of our learner publications and refreshed the design to keep them accessible and engaging.

2 **You said you wanted more in-person workshops to share your views.**

We have met with learners in schools across Scotland to discuss issues that mattered to them, including what Qualifications Scotland means for learners, the exam timetable 2027 and improving our learner communications.

3 **You said you wanted us to improve our social media presence and use platforms that learners use.**

We ran a poll on Instagram asking learners to let us know what questions they had ahead of Results Day, and provided the answers they needed.

We have learned from our engagement numbers and our partners how to best utilise platforms such as TikTok. We have included more person to-camera videos.

Our work with parents

We continue to engage with parents and carers and their representative organisations. We are in regular contact with Connect (formerly called the Scottish Parent Teacher Council), the Scottish Assembly of Parents and Carers and the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) to hear feedback from our parent and carer audience. Connect and NPFS also have representation at the National Qualifications Strategic Group.

We seek their advice on a variety of issues including communications and their information needs to best support their learners. We have held specific webinars for parents and carers, most recently in March 2026, with over 550 parents registered for the event, which covered exam support and guidance.

Our work with teachers

During the discovery phase of the design of our new School Partnership Team, we have engaged with stakeholder boards and internal teams. Through this we identified some immediate key outcomes for the School Partnership Team.

You said...we did

- 1** **Communication could be more co-ordinated, and the response to individual enquiries could be improved.**
The new School Partnership Team has the agreed remit for co-ordination of two way engagement with schools. Becoming the internal contact point for school-related activity, it will manage the scheduling through an annual plan and provide guidance to internal teams.
- 2** **In-person engagement is the most effective way of building relationships. Local authority networks provide an additional forum.**
The Schools Partnership Team engagement strategy prioritises in-person events, school and local authority activity.

- 3 The visibility of the School Partnership Team could be improved.**
We have developed a communications plan and webpages to increase awareness of the team's work.
- 4 Understanding Standards is helpful, and in-person events are most valued. The range of subject support is inconsistent and, in some cases, outdated.**
We are reviewing the materials on the Understanding Standards website to ensure they're all current. We will develop new materials to plug any gaps. We are developing a clear rationale to decide when we use in-person events or other approaches. This aims to make best use of our resources to maximise access to in-person events. We are also providing training and support to improve the quality of webinars and other approaches.
- 5 Co-ordinator conferences, which provided effective guidance and support, are no longer provided for all schools.**
The School Partnership team regional events in June 2026, will include operational support for schools.
- 6 To support schools, a clearly communicated plan of when changes will take place (short-medium-long term) is required.**
The communications directorate is developing a clear plan which will be shared with schools.
- 7 There are aspects of the current suite of exams that should be addressed before the reformed qualifications of 2031.**
We will gather the views of a wider range of stakeholders during summer 2026.

Our work with colleges

We continue to strengthen engagement with the college sector to develop their portfolio and ensure qualifications meet the evolving needs of learners.

Next Gen: HN

Following the 3-year pilot, 2025–26 was the first year of restricted delivery of the new Next Gen HNC/D. Throughout the pilot we undertook engagement activities with learners and practitioners to help shape the support we offer centres delivering Next Gen HN.

This year we have engaged widely with stakeholders to ensure they feel confident for the roll-out of the new HNs to all centres. This included working with the College Quality Focus Group to keep centres updated on Next Gen and understand their concerns. We also ran workshops to reach a large number of colleges to hear their views at Community of Practice Events and Quality Manager Events where we gave an overview of the Next Gen programme, had focused discussions on operational aspects, shared resources and invited requests for additional support.

We continued to support Qualification Design Teams (QDTs) during developments and ad hoc requests from centres and have increased the resources available on the Next Gen website and Qualifications Scotland Academy site.



College Quality Group

The College Quality Focus Group has been running for 18 years and has representatives from across Scotland's colleges. They work collaboratively with colleagues in Qualifications Scotland to refine processes, enhance centres' and learners' experience, and design innovative approaches to delivery and quality assurance.

The group meets four or five times a year, and also works together to host an annual College Quality Managers event which is open to a wider range of college colleagues.

You said...we did

- 1 You want more regular engagement and a dedicated resource to deal with issues regarding HN/VQ quality assurance.**
Worked with colleges to create MS Teams Platform that allows us to provide each college with a dedicated Quality Assurance (QA) contact, providing fortnightly check-in calls and taking a tailored approach to supporting each college through QA processes.
- 2 You said we had a 'one size fits all' approach to SVQ verification that did not take account of best practice and caused additional workload.**
We now have a risk-based approach to SVQ verification that is efficient and effective for our centres and for Qualifications Scotland.
- 3 You told us that in-person quality assurance visits are resource intensive, and divert staff from teaching, learning and assessing.**
Where appropriate, we now carry out virtual QA. Centres upload candidate evidence in advance, which is reviewed by the External Verifier ahead of a Teams call to provide feedback. This provides an effective way of ensuring national standards are maintained whilst maximising use of resources
- 4 You said you wanted to better align the timing of systems verification.**
Our Quality Enhancement Managers have worked with colleges to align the timings of self-assessment and systems verification in line with the preference of each college. This started in April 2026.

Our work with employers and training providers

We continue to work with employers and training providers (ETPs) to strengthen engagement across Scotland's training landscape to meet the evolving needs of employers and learners.

We offer workshops to support centres through our approval process, and we offer a professional development workshop programme to deepen centres' knowledge of the assessment process.

Our Employer and Training Provider (ETP) Forum is a platform for us to collaborate with employers and training providers, seeking feedback on our decisions before they roll out. It helps identify knowledge gaps or areas where training providers feel they need more information. We keep members of the forum informed of progress, plans and changes, and the forum allows them to share ideas, issues and opportunities.

Attendees use the meetings to discuss a range of topics and wider industry themes. These include assessment, quality assurance, collaborating on best practice about matters relating to training and education, and the direction the industry is going.

Our ETP Forum has over 25 members from our diverse customer base across Scotland. It is also supported by a Consultative Group comprising an additional 120 ETPs who participate in surveys and consultations to share their experience and views on key issues.



You said...we did

- 1** | **You said we had a 'one size fits all' approach to SVQ verification that did not take account of best practice. It also caused additional workload.**
We now have a risk-based approach to SVQ verification that is efficient and effective for our centres and for Qualifications Scotland.
- 2** | **You told us that in-person quality assurance (QA) visits are resource-intensive, and divert staff from teaching, learning and assessing.**
Where we can, we now carry out virtual QA. Centres upload candidate evidence in advance, and it's reviewed by the EV ahead of a Teams call to provide feedback. This provides an effective way of ensuring national standards are maintained while maximising use of resources.

Our customer facing teams

Liaison Team

Our Liaison Team supports centres in the delivery of National Qualifications. Team members engage with approximately 450 centres all over the country — each centre is unique in terms of the context and challenges that it faces.

Members of the team build links within each local authority area, and develop positive working relationships. They work to ensure that centres are aware of all operational aspects of National Qualifications, as well as qualification development updates and policy. Whether it is a secondary school, college or a training provider, the Liaison Team reinforces Qualifications Scotland's messages and clarify procedures to maximise centres' understanding and compliance.

Our Liaison Team plays a vital role in building strong, constructive relationships with our customers. The team engages in different ways and across different levels, working closely with centres' qualifications co ordinators, but also supporting probationers, senior management teams, teachers and practitioners within centres.

Acting as a trusted point of contact, they listen carefully to feedback, work to understand concerns, and support customers in resolving issues quickly and effectively. They feed any concerns raised back to the organisation. By gathering insight from real experiences, the team helps ensure that customer voices are heard and reflected in how we improve our services.

Business Development

Regional Managers

The Regional Manager team (RMs) play a pivotal role in strengthening engagement across Scotland's education and training landscape. Over the past year, RMs have supported more than 840 centres across Scotland including schools, colleges, local authorities, employers and training providers. Through this work they have helped centres to develop their portfolios and identify new opportunities that meet the evolving needs of learners and industry.

The team covers all qualifications, but principally SVQs, HNs, Awards and National Progression Awards (NPAs). One example of the team's engagement work was raising the profile of the NPA portfolio in schools. This helped strengthen its presence in the school market, leading to an increase in NPA certification.

Over the last year the team have had over 1,200 engagements with existing and new customers.

The team also engage with organisations on a commercial basis to create bespoke qualifications for their staff and students, collaborating closely to ensure qualifications are tailored to their specific goals and skills requirements.

The team has extensive knowledge of our individual customers, their business needs and are continually building trust. They also work closely with colleagues in Skills Development Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Regional Groups, Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Enterprise, other organisations and stakeholders.

Some of the activities the team have engaged in this year:

- Hosting the Scottish Training Federation Annual Conference.
- Involved in the College Quality Focus Groups, where the organisation seeks to better understand the needs of the college sector.
- Attending the College Development Network Awards, and being involved in the judging, and attending other customer award ceremonies, where we celebrate the successes of our learners, practitioners and centres.
- Attending regional Chamber of Commerce events where we strengthen our knowledge and understanding of local business needs.
- Sitting on a numerous Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) employer board and participating in DYW events to help develop and support partnerships between schools, colleges and businesses.

Business Development Consultant Team

Our team of Business Development Consultants (BDCs) acts as the link between Qualifications Scotland and approximately 400 smaller ETP centres, providing tailored support to deepen the relationship between customer and business. The team is the first point of contact for new business enquiries and ensures that Qualifications Scotland is entering into sustainable and mutually beneficial centre relationships.

Customer Service Team

The Customer Service Team is the first point of contact for all our customers who contact us by phone or through email. The team consists of nine Customer Service Advisors, four Customer Service Operators and one Team Leader.

They provide answers and responses to customers most common questions and direct enquiries that require a more detailed response to the relevant business area.

They also champion outstanding customer experience across every interaction, and act as the voice of our customers, providing feedback to colleagues and identify where improvements could be made.

They deliver our Candidate Advice Line during National Qualifications results week, where colleagues are available to answer callers' queries about their certificate — and any other questions they have.

Our dedicated engagement resource

Learner and Parent Engagement Team

The Learner and Parent Engagement Team takes an outreach-based approach, engaging directly with learners and parents and carers in schools and colleges through workshops, focus groups, and co-design activities, ensuring that the learner voice is central to Qualifications Scotland's work.

The team has strong working relationships with a range of national organisations, including the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP), sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland), and Young Scot, enabling effective and wide-reaching engagement across diverse learner communities.

The team also advises Qualifications Scotland colleagues on best practice for engaging with learners and incorporating their feedback. The team actively promotes two-way communication, creating opportunities for learners to participate in discussions that affect their future. To ensure this participation is both effective and meaningful, the team has developed a dedicated engagement framework and applies the '7 Golden Rules for Participation', as set out by the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland.

The team also works closely with Connect, the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS), and the Scottish Assembly of Parents and Carers to share information, gather views on key issues, and ensure that the perspectives of parents and carers inform Qualifications Scotland's decision-making.

School Partnership Team

Our School Partnership Team is transforming the way we engage with teachers and putting learners at the centre of our decision-making.

It is committed to being closer to the classroom — ensuring teachers have a voice in shaping the future of qualifications and assessment through consistent and responsive engagement with schools.

The School Partnership Team has delivered a series of Voices from the Classroom events to bring Qualifications Scotland staff and teachers and practitioners together to hear directly from those leading on empowering learners through the curriculum, school timetables and qualifications.

Through in-person, hybrid and online sessions, the School Partnership Team have focused on school timetables, our qualifications and curriculum, the growing role of NPAs and future opportunities as well as additional support needs (ASN) education.



Policy, Analysis and Standards

Our Policy, Analysis and Standards teams ensure that robust evidence and analysis is used to inform decision-making across Qualifications Scotland and the wider education system. They are responsible for commissioning, carrying out and collating research to inform and support all aspects of our activities.

The teams regularly conduct qualitative and quantitative research with our stakeholders, covering a wide range of issues. They provide thematic and statistical analysis to Qualifications Scotland.

They regularly publish statistics, data and analytics relating to our qualifications to ensure that we provide accurate information and transparency to the system.

You can find details of their research and findings on our [website](#).

Your Voice panels

Our Your Voice partnership panels have been running since November 2024 and continue to give every learner and educator the opportunity to share their experiences and help shape the future of qualifications and assessment.

The panels are open to learners, educators in Scotland's schools and colleges, and parents and carers of senior phase learners. Members can share their views and influence our qualifications, assessments, products, and services through surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

You can sign up to our [Your Voice panels](#) on our website.

Wider engagement activities

Qualification Design Teams

When developing a new qualification or revalidating an existing one, we invite specialists in the subject area to participate in a Qualification Design Team (QDT). The purpose of the QDT is to enable the exchange of ideas and provide solutions to any issues with the qualification development, and to act as our link with external stakeholders, ensuring that the design and implementation of our qualifications is the best it can be.

The make-up of QDTs varies, depending on the qualification but, to ensure we have an informed view throughout the process, each will include experienced practitioners and industry representatives, along with Qualifications Scotland staff. We also consider other national bodies, for example Colleges Scotland.

Additional consultants may be engaged as needed to undertake specific work such as market research or identifying appropriate National Occupational Standards or professional body requirements.

National Qualifications Strategic Group

The National Qualifications Strategic Group (NQSG) provides strategic advice to Qualifications Scotland on the examination diet, contingency arrangements should exams not go ahead, and the awarding of National Qualifications. Members of the NQSG represent the education sector including, learners, parents, teaching unions, colleges, schools, universities, education bodies and organisations, local authorities and Scottish Government.

The group sits alongside Qualifications Scotland's statutory governance arrangements.

The NQSG directs, co-ordinates and considers the work of a number of sub-groups that carry out more detailed work on its behalf. This currently includes the Communications Group, but further sub-groups may be convened as necessary.



Corporate Parenting

Qualifications Scotland is a proud **Corporate Parent**. Our **Corporate Parenting Plan** outlines our responsibilities and explains how we have interpreted these responsibilities in our commitments to care-experienced people.

We have an important role to play in supporting the Scottish Government to listen to the needs, fears and wishes of care-experienced people, and to be proactive and determined in our collective efforts to meet them. Our internal Corporate Parenting Steering Group (CPSG) has responsibility for the review, implementation, monitoring and reporting of Qualifications Scotland's **Corporate Parenting commitments**.

We also work closely with Who Cares? Scotland to ensure we understand and respond to the needs of people with experience of care. We are committed to doing everything we can to help care-experienced people reach their full potential, celebrating their achievements by ensuring that all aspects of their development are nurtured.



Work outside Scotland

Rest of UK

Our Rest of UK (RoUK) team includes a National Manager, five Regional Managers and a Sales Analyst. They are responsible for building and maintaining strong customer relationships in England, Wales and Ireland. The team provide face-to-face visits with potential customers and support them through the Qualifications Scotland approval process.

The team gives real insight to the RoUK market and acts as the voice of the customer within Qualifications Scotland.

International

The Scottish Government recently published a refreshed **international education strategy**. Our International Team support this with our international activity, nurturing opportunities in all of our key international regions including South Asia, the Americas, South-East Asia, EMEA (Europe the Middle East and Africa), and China.

Through our international activity, we work in partnership with the local education organisations, regulators and ministry-level officials in the regions, as well as representatives from UK Government departments.

We regularly host delegations from countries all over the world, which facilitates knowledge sharing and learning, bringing a wealth of experience together.



Other stakeholder engagement

We maintain an active and ongoing presence across the education sector and industry, regularly meeting and collaborating with stakeholders to strengthen relationships and share expertise.

We participate in a range of sector conferences and events, including those hosted by School Leaders Scotland (SLS) and Colleges Scotland. In addition to attending these events, Qualifications Scotland has taken a proactive role in supporting sector discussions, having hosted a Scottish Training Federation (STF) conference as well as the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) School Ambassador Networking Event, at which our School Partnership Team presented.

Staff engagement

Throughout the transition to Qualifications Scotland, our Internal Communications team delivered a comprehensive programme of staff engagement activity to keep colleagues informed, connected and involved.

A series of live events, led by Chief Executive Nick Page and Chair Shirley Rogers, gave staff the opportunity to engage directly with the organisation's leaders and develop a sense of shared ownership in the transition. Building on this, Colleague Cafés have been introduced as a regular, structured platform, held both in-person and online, where staff can connect with the Corporate Leadership Team, share their perspectives, and discuss organisational priorities in an open and transparent way. Feedback from these sessions has been positive.

Staff have also played an active role in shaping the organisation. A series of workshops and staff engagement sessions saw colleagues contribute directly to the development of Qualifications Scotland's new core values, with strong attendance and creative input from across the organisation. Engagement sessions have similarly been held to gather staff views on the new Corporate Plan.

Our new People Committee provides a further avenue for colleagues to contribute their expertise directly to the Qualifications Scotland Board. The Internal Communications team has actively promoted the committee and recruited representatives from across the organisation, ensuring a broad and representative staff voice at the highest level.

Digitally, a refreshed intranet has made it easier for staff to access updates, campaigns and toolkits during the transition. Staff also connect through Viva Engage and an internal eMagazine, which reached record viewing figures in early 2026, reflecting strong levels of colleague-led engagement across the organisation.

What's coming next year

Our customer-facing teams will continue to deliver our ongoing engagement activities and offer support to our learners, teachers, practitioners and partners on a daily basis. There are also some significant pieces of additional engagement that are important to highlight as we move forward as Qualifications Scotland over the next 12 months.



Strategic Advisory Council

The Strategic Advisory Council was established under the Education (Scotland) Act 2025 and the Qualifications Scotland (Strategic Advisory Council) (Establishment) Regulations 2026. It will operate as an independent advisory body to Qualifications Scotland and Scottish Ministers. Its role is to consider matters relating to Qualifications Scotland's functions and qualifications, and to provide informed, evidence-based advice that reflects the perspectives of stakeholders across Scotland.

The Council will engage with a range of partners and stakeholders, and has regard to wider consultation activity and ministerial guidance. The Council plays an important role in supporting transparency, public confidence, and continuous improvement within Scotland's qualifications system.

Membership of the Council is determined by Scottish Ministers from a broad cross-section of interests, including learners and young people, parents and carers, education practitioners, trade unions, local authorities, further and higher education, and business and industry. Members are appointed for fixed terms and are expected to act in the public interest, drawing on their knowledge and experience to inform collective advice rather than representing specific organisations.

The Council is co-chaired by two conveners appointed by Scottish Ministers, and operates in accordance with statutory requirements, including holding at least one meeting in public each year and ensuring that there is an appropriate level of openness in its work. Through its structured advice and engagement activity, the Council contributes to ensuring that stakeholder voices are meaningfully reflected in the development and delivery of qualifications in Scotland.



People Committee

The People Committee was established to provide strategic oversight, assurance and advice on all matters relating to the organisation's people, culture and workforce. Its membership brings together Board members, trade union representatives and staff representatives, ensuring that a diverse range of perspectives informs people related decision making. This inclusive structure enables the Committee to scrutinise key areas such as organisational culture, staff wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, and the effectiveness of internal engagement including staff surveys. By drawing on the experience and insight of its members, the Committee supports the Board in maintaining a positive, collaborative and high performing working environment.

Established on day one of Qualifications Scotland, the Committee is in the early stages of its rollout, but is already positioned to play a central role in strengthening the organisation's approach to staff engagement and fostering a culture built on openness, respect and continuous improvement.

It provides a formal mechanism for constructive dialogue between leadership, staff and trade union partners, ensuring that workforce views are considered in strategic decisions and that commitments made through engagement activity are followed through.

The Committee does not replace existing consultative or negotiating structures. Rather, its sole purpose is to ensure that the organisation's decisions reflect internal voices. As Qualifications Scotland continues to evolve, the People Committee will remain a key forum for championing the employee experience and embedding people centred values across the organisation.



Learner Interest Committee

The Learner Interest Committee will bring together learners and recent learners from across Scotland, each offering their own perspective on what it is like to study, to learn and to be assessed.

Members have been identified through a fair and inclusive process, using a random ballot to give all applicants an equal opportunity to take part, alongside consideration of a range of perspectives. Once membership is confirmed, the committee will reflect the breadth of learner experiences across Scotland.

As an advisory group, the committee will provide us with direct insight into how qualifications are experienced in practice. Members will share their views on what works well, where challenges exist, and how qualifications and assessment could be improved. These insights will play an important role in shaping national conversations, with feedback informing senior leadership and Board level discussions on future developments.

The Committee will be supported by two co conveners, including Ewan Carmichael, a Qualifications Scotland Board member. A second co convener will be identified from within the group once it is fully established, supporting a learner led approach to how the committee develops. This structure will create a space where learners can contribute meaningfully, helping to build a more inclusive, responsive and learner focused qualifications system for Scotland.



Teacher and Practitioner Interest Committee

The Teacher and Practitioner Interest Committee will bring together a diverse group of professionals from across Scotland's education and training system. Members will contribute valuable, real world experience of delivering qualifications, alongside insight from across the wider education and training landscape. They have been appointed through a fair and transparent recruitment process, with a focus on identifying individuals who can offer strong professional insight and a range of perspectives. Once confirmed, the group will represent voices from across Scotland and its diverse communities.

The committee will sit at the heart of our work, ensuring that the voices of teachers and practitioners shape the future of qualifications. Its role will be advisory, providing direct insight into how qualifications and assessment operate in practice. Members will share their experiences, highlight emerging challenges and opportunities, and contribute informed perspectives on policy, design and delivery. While the committee will not make formal decisions, its views will influence national discussions, with its feedback informing senior leadership and Board level considerations.

The committee will be led by two co-conveners, including Gerry O'Neil, a Qualifications Scotland Board member, providing a direct link between the committee and senior decision-making. A second co-convener will be appointed from within the membership once the committee begins its work. This structure will support meaningful engagement and help build a more inclusive, responsive and future-focused qualifications system for Scotland.



New charters

Under the Education (Scotland) Act 2025 we are required to develop a Learner Charter and a Teacher and Practitioner Charter. These charters will set out what learners (children, young people and adults) and what teachers and practitioners should expect from Qualifications Scotland.

Large-scale engagement activity is being planned to ensure our new Learner Charter and Teacher and Practitioner Charter are fully co-designed.

To develop our Learner Charter we will work with a variety of learners undertaking our qualifications. We will actively listen to the needs of learners who use BSL, learners who have educational support needs, and care-experienced learners, and we will ensure we hear from learners from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. We will also engage with parents and carers and any other person who can represent the interests of learners.

We will collaborate with people providing teaching or training for our qualifications, people who are training to be a teacher, and people who represent the interests of teachers and practitioners.



Qualifications reform

Over the next few years, we will review and reform our qualifications to ensure they're fit for purpose in a modern, flourishing Scotland. This is one of the priorities we have set out in our corporate plan.

We will design and develop reformed National Courses as part of the Scottish Government's wider curriculum and assessment reform programme. A focus of this work will be to reflect the curriculum improvements being led by Education Scotland, ensuring alignment and strong progression between the broad general education (BGE) and Senior Phase (S4 to S6). The work will also rebalance assessment to reduce reliance on high-stakes exams.

We will also review our wider portfolio of vocational and technical qualifications, and make improvements where evidence supports this. Our aim is to make sure that our qualifications are current, relevant and ready for the future, and to support clearer progression pathways.

This is a significant and long-term programme of work, which we will do in collaboration with schools, colleges, employers, training providers, and learners.

As we design our products and services, we will draw on the core principles of the **Scottish Approach to Service Design**. This involves going beyond simply engaging with stakeholders but rather working with them closely to co-design services and products that work for them. To do this, we will undertake a large scale and substantial programme of engagement.

This approach will allow us to revisit, for example, our data analysis, to explore the emerging themes. We will investigate these fully before making recommendations for change. This means our engagement and reform work will be iterative.

Through the initial engagement stages, there will be opportunities to build deeper connections with stakeholders, bringing them into the process of co-design so we can respond collectively to their feedback. This will help us begin building prototype models for new and or revised qualification products.

Through this iterative approach to design, we'll be able to test these prototypes more widely through further engagement, to ensure that we design the most appropriate solution before we implement change in the system.

The new School Partnership team, led by our seconded Head Teacher, will play an important role in engaging directly with practising teachers and establishing a renewed trust with schools at each stage of the reform programme.

We have also established a new Teacher and Practitioner Interest Committee and have strengthened teacher representation on our Board of Management to ensure that classroom teachers have a voice in all that we do. We will work closely with our partner organisations, colleges, employer training providers, higher education institutions, subject associations and employers to ensure that the reformed qualifications provide excellent pathways for learners when they move to the next stage of their education, employment or skills development.

The voice of children and young people will play a significant role in our work, reflecting our commitment and legal obligations in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Act. Our new Learner Interest Committee will help us to put the learner's voice at the heart of decision making. Parents' and carers' voices will also be prominent in the future reform of qualifications and assessments.



Digital transformation

Through our digital transformation project, we will introduce simpler, more efficient digital services that will transform delivery of our qualifications, assessments and supporting services.

Digital transformation is in its infancy, and future engagement will inform our work in this area. We will work with learners, educators, and our staff and appointees to design services that will save time for centres and teachers and make it easier for learners to take their next steps.

Ongoing engagement activities



School Partnership Team

As part of our continued commitment to work collaboratively with the education system, our School Partnership Team will take on increased responsibility for learner, parent and teacher engagement to support qualifications reform across the school sector.

At the end of April 2026, the team welcomed four experienced teachers who have been seconded as Qualifications Engagement Practitioners to further strengthen our links with schools. They will work alongside colleagues from across the organisation who bring experience in qualifications, assessment and insight from schools.

The team planned a series of regional School Partnership Team events for June 2026. This includes operational support for schools and the opportunity to provide feedback on qualifications reform.

Further workshops and events will take place throughout the year to ensure the voice of teachers, learners and parents is reflected in our reformed qualifications. The team will also host virtual and in-person events with teachers to co-design our professional learning and engagement strategies.

Get in touch

Call: **0345 279 1000**

Visit: **[qualifications.gov.scot](https://www.qualifications.gov.scot)**



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