

Consultation on a proposal for a Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland



RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please note that this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name / Organisation

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3. Permissions

I am responding as an...

Individual

/

Organisation or Group

Please tick as appropriate

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes No

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

(c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes No

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes

No

About the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is the leading charity in Scotland dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. In Scotland, we have a dedicated team based in Glasgow and led by Heather Gray, Director.

NDCS provides a dedicated Family Support Service across the country. Our early year's project, Your Child, Your Choices, delivers family sign language courses across specific geographical locations. NDCS also commissions research to inform the sector and engages in policy and campaigning activity to help make deaf children and their families a political priority.

Please note that NDCS uses the term "deaf" to mean all types and levels of deafness.

Question 1

Is the strategy founded on the right principles? (Page 11)

Yes No

Are there other principles that should be considered?

We agree these principles underpinning the strategy set out a positive approach for the future of digital learning and teaching in Scotland. It is particularly positive that the importance of partnership working is clearly identified as a crucial element of taking the strategy forward.

The “opportunities for all learners” principle is critical and NDCS agrees that approaches to digital learning and teaching must work towards improving outcomes for all learners. NDCS recommends that this principle would be further strengthened by explicitly outlining the intention to promote educational inclusion through better use of digital learning. This principle is an opportunity to highlight that our approach to digital technology offers huge potential to support the learning of every child as long as their specific needs are taken into account. This is particularly the case in terms of ensuring technology approaches are accessible to those with additional support needs such as those who are deaf, or those who may have less experience or knowledge of technology due to socioeconomic background.

The literature review also recognised that parents/carers will play a key role in delivering the strategy. This is also in line with the prominent role parents are expected to play in the new National Improvement Framework. The strategy needs to outline how it will raise the capacity of parents to understand how technology can be used to support the learning and teaching of their child. This is particularly the case for those parents with additional support needs, communication requirements, and those who do not have access to or knowledge of technology, such as those who may be from deprived socio-economic backgrounds.

Question 2

Are the four key themes identified the right ones to focus on? (Page 15)

Yes No

Are there other themes that should be considered?

NDCS agrees that the four themes outlined in the paper are key to the success of the strategy.

A commitment to extend the skills and knowledge of teachers is critical, as is an ongoing commitment to maintain relevant knowledge in a fast paced sector. A clear commitment to skills training that is fully resourced and embedded into professional development programmes is critical to ensuring teachers feel they can take ownership of the strategy.

As outlined in the above question, NDCS recommends that the need to promote inclusion through digital learning is highlighted in the section around improving access to digital technology for all learners. This goes beyond purely access to technology, to include how and why technology is used to meet the needs of every learner.

In February of this year the National Deaf Children's Society and Education Scotland worked in partnership to deliver a Deaf Learners Conference. This brought over 70 deaf young people from across Scotland together to discuss their school experiences. One of the top three challenges that were identified was around technology. There were clear inconsistencies across Scotland, some deaf young people had good experiences with hearing technologies at school while many regarded the knowledge and understanding of hearing technology at their school to be poor. There are inconsistencies in the standard of technology being used in local authorities: while some learners access high quality and modern radio aids and FM systems etc, others have older less than optimal technology which can create barriers for the learner.

Question 3

Do you agree with the priorities for action outlined in the 'leaders' theme? (Page 16)

Yes No

Are there other actions that should be considered?

Yes. Local and national leadership is fundamental to driving forward this strategy and creating the necessary enthusiasm, capacity and commitment to it. Technology 'champions' or similar among education practitioners in local areas or schools may also be a way to help create develop knowledge within the workforce. Individuals who take on this role could receive targeted training and have a remit for staying up to date with current trends and future ideas.

The success of digital learning and teaching will also be dependent on how well-resourced the local approach is. In the current climate of cuts, which is likely to worsen in the coming year, it will be challenging for leaders to divert resources into fulfilling the strategy, especially if it is regarded as an add on. NDCS would welcome further information on whether the Scottish Government will be making additional funds available to education authorities to enable them to prioritise the strategy.

Question 4

Do you agree with the priorities for action outlined in the 'access' theme? (Page 17)

Yes No

Are there other actions that should be considered?

NDCS agrees these are key priorities.

We agree that national procurement is critical to a consistently high quality provision of technology. We recommend that hearing technologies are included in a national procurement programme. Education authorities may need to purchase very small numbers of expensive equipment for their deaf learners. National procurement is an important way to make this process more economical, which is particularly crucial in today's climate.

The strategy should also include considerations of the accessibility of access to technology, and especially how accessible technology is to learners with additional support needs. For example, a very common complaint from deaf learners is that the increased use of video in classrooms is challenging for them. Videos are rarely subtitled or signed and can be very difficult to follow for deaf children and young people.

Question 5

Do you agree with the priorities for action outlined in the 'curriculum and assessment' theme? (Pages 18-19)

Yes No

Are there other actions that should be considered?

As above, we need to ensure that where technology is embedded into the curriculum and assessment processes it is completely accessible to every learner, including those who are deaf. It is crucial that no young person unintentionally left behind or disadvantaged in the move towards digitalising learning and teaching.

Question 6

Do you agree with the priorities for action outlined in the 'teachers' theme?
(Pages 20-21)

Yes No

Are there other actions that should be considered?

NDCS agrees that extending the skills and confidence of teachers is a key area of work needed to deliver the strategy. Planning of teacher training should be done in consultation with teachers to ensure it meets their requirements. In addition it should make sense locally in terms of the local availability of technology, local priorities and the local plan for delivering the strategy.

Question 7

Would you be willing to share your experiences of digital learning and teaching with us?

Yes No

If so, please provide the details you would like us to use to contact you (e.g. an email address) in the box below.

We would be happy to share the resources NDCS has produced about using technology with deaf children and how to communicate with deaf children. These are available to download from our website at www.ndcs.org.uk

Question 8

Is there anything else you wish to add about the strategy?

It is not clear from the document how the successful implementation of the strategy will be measured and what the key performance indicators will be used to illustrate progress.

In addition, will local authorities be expected to develop implementation plans and if so how will progress against these be monitored? Ideally this process would be embedded into existing self-assessment and review tools, and national inspection criteria.

