

Consultation Questions

Section 1

1. Do you agree with the reasons given for

I CAN is concerned with promoting the importance of language and communication development as key foundation skills for the development of literacy, learning, emotional and social skills. Given that, as the document states, English is the main language spoken in Scotland we are keen to ensure that there is continued focus on the development of

<p>promoting and learning languages on pages 4 and 5, and that these are the main reasons for supporting current language initiatives in Scotland? If not, why not?</p>	<p>communication per se. The reasons for supporting language initiatives outlined on pages 4 and 5 support the importance of communication as a key foundation skill. Difficulty with developing effective communication skills can have long lasting and significant impact on educational opportunities as well as economic and social well being and inclusion ; language has been seen as a protective factor in ensuring more successful outcomes in these areas</p>
<p><i>2. Do you agree that the language initiatives described on pages 6 – 12 and elsewhere are the key areas for language promotion in Scotland? If not, why not?</i></p>	<p>I CAN supports and endorses the comments made on the importance of language as being “at the core of participation and equality in our society”™. We feel strongly that effective language and communication skills are key in enabling children, young people and adults to meet their full potential. We are please to see a focus on the importance of good literacy skills, but would like to see the link between early language skills and later literacy development emphasized. It is now widely accepted that successful development of literacy depends upon competent language skills . As such, the initiatives outlined on page 7 should include those focused on developing children and young people’s language skills as pre-cursors to attainment in literacy. Language and communication at the heart of children’s policy throughout the age range, with this reflected clearly in the 3 – 18 curriculum review, A Curriculum for Excellence, would ensure development of the 4 capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. Communication is at the core of each of these. I CAN also agrees with the need to differentiate between language difficulties and language difference and to celebrate the diversity of language experiences. As such it is essential that educators and those working with or supporting children and young people are aware of ways to identify those with communication support needs as early as possible.</p>
	<p>I CAN supports the development of language plans and particularly advice which supports the “equipping of people in Scotland with fluent English Language skills”™. We suggest the addition of advice about how language skills can be supported in schools and businesses as these are so crucial in successful</p>

<p>3. Do you agree that the key principles listed on pages 14 and 15 should shape language activity in Scotland? If not, why not?</p>	<p>learning, relationship building and effective working practices. We also suggest the need to ensure that there are clear links with policy for people with communication support needs in relation to fair and equal linguistic access to information and services and the celebration of linguistic diversity which includes those with communication support needs. We are pleased that there is reference to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), specifically mentioning the need for accessible information.</p>
<p>4. Are there any other comments you would like to offer on this strategy in relation to the promotion of languages in Scotland?</p>	<p>Although we understand that the focus of this strategy is around encouraging the development and support of other languages, I CAN feels an emphasis of the development of language and communication per se is essential in order to present a holistic picture of "Languages in Scotland".</p>
<p>5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, how do you think you may be able to contribute to the success of the strategy?</p>	<p>I CAN is the charity that helps children communicate. We are a leading organisation in the field of education for children with a communication disability, as well as in education practice in supporting typical communication development. We have proven experience in influencing and raising awareness of linking of language with social and emotional development, with economic opportunities and with enriching education and literacy learning. We are keen to see an emphasis on speaking and listening across the qualifications framework for the whole of the children's workforce so that children and young people have the language skills necessary for employment and study. We offer resources which enhance professional development, provide accreditation systems and demonstrate good practice for the development of all children's communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Early Talk programme for children in the early years • Primary Talk (currently under development and incorporating School Talk) for primary aged children • Chatter Matters resource including DVD and supporting information for families to support children's early language development • Consultancy and information to support practitioners and families in developing children's language communication www.ican.org.uk <p>A document supporting many of the points made in this response is our recently released 'Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication'</p>

report, available at www.ican.org.uk . A Scottish focus on the issues outlined in this report will be published in September 2007, when we launch our 'Make Chatter Matter' Campaign in Scotland. Please contact us for further information.