

Peter J Peacock
Minister for Education and Young People
Scottish Executive Education Department
Schools Division
Area 2B North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

PETER PEACOCK
24 MAR 2005
PRIVATE OFFICE

16th March 2005

Dear Sir

Re:- Parental Involvement Bill Consultation

Our organisation delivers Childcare Training nationally and we spend a great deal of time training in Scotland. Our packages include:- Handling Children's and Teenage Behaviour, Working with Children with Special Needs, Building Self-esteem, Working in the arena of Accommodated Children and Child Protection. Our courses are well received by both professionals and parents in Scotland. We have been impressed by the level of commitment and enthusiasm professionals have shown with regard to involving parents in all aspects of their work, but are mindful of the fact that they are struggling to facilitate this involvement.

Whilst we applaud the spirit of this Bill and welcome it's arrival we are concerned that processes and training will not be put in place to help workers, teachers and heads to engage with parents and thus incorporate into these forums a group of parents that truly reflects the school's community. As we are all aware there are always parents who are interested in their children and their school lives and these parents will volunteer and become very useful members of any parent working group, in any setting. From our reading of the Bill, we feel that you also want to attract parents who have to date not felt able, or who have not been interested in working closely with the school. The Bill does not offer any proposals as to how you might do this.

Delivering training to our colleagues in Education in Scotland, (and elsewhere in the country) we have become acutely aware of the high numbers of children who are excluded from school and those who, when in school, are being extremely disruptive. Engaging with their parents and involving them in the management issues is a major element in resolving some, if not all of these issues. Parent forums will really help here provided they include a membership that is truly representative of the community. In our opinion there will have to be work done in the community to enable this to happen and to empower the parents you wish to attract.

It will take high levels of self-esteem, confidence and communication skills to participate appropriately on these forums and our experience tells us that the parents who truly need to feel supported by the school and who the school needs support from in terms of helping their child are usually lacking in those skills.

We would like to suggest that you provide training for teachers, heads and personnel involved in the setting up of the forums so that you can ensure appropriate membership and parental involvement, thus enabling your very positive proposals to be carried out effectively. The training we would recommend is training around esteem building, running groups for parents on behavioural issues in school settings and also training on how to work with parents. We know that these are issues that all schools struggle with and those colleagues who have received such training from our organisation have been delighted with the difference it has made to their practise.

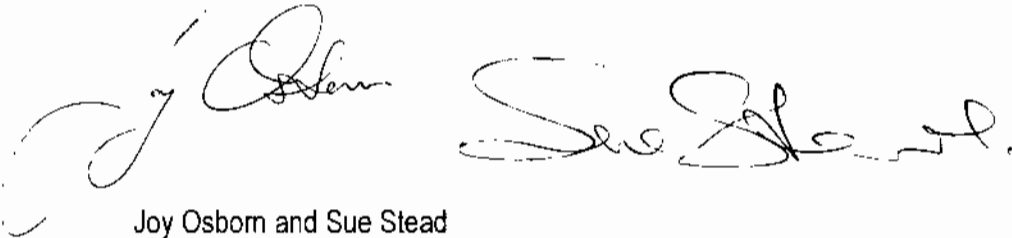
With regard to the to the direct questions posed in the draft Bill we would like to raise the following issues:-

Question 11:- To support Accommodated children and appropriately represent their needs we feel that the membership of the panel should include one or more of the following i.e. foster parent, adoptive parent, social worker and/or residential worker.

Question 12:- we would be concerned re the omission of police checks even if people were not directly supervising children due to issues around "grooming" and the setting up of systems, situations where children may be vulnerable. Whilst we are aware that police checks are not always effective and that such checks may not encourage some parents to volunteer their services we would nevertheless urge parent forums to be vigilant of the risks in not undertaking such checks - particularly if these forums are going to be responsible for recruitment.

We have enclosed details of the services we provide, but please contact us if you require any further information. We can develop specific packages to meet the differing needs of schools. We can also supply details of service users so you can evaluate for yourself the effectiveness of our training. If you decided to explore the feasibility of the Bill by way of setting up pilot projects, we would be willing to be involved in a training or consultative capacity.

Yours Sincerely



Joy Osborn and Sue Stead
Directors, Future Childcare Training Ltd

Name:	FUTURE CHILD-CARE TRAINING LTD
E-mail:	
	<p>Are you responding as:</p> <p>an individual <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>on behalf of a group or organisation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Individuals:	<p>Do you agree to your response being made public (in SE library and/or on SE website)?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis.</p> <p>Yes, make my response, name and address all available <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address <input type="checkbox"/></p>
On behalf of groups or organisations:	<p>Your name and address as respondees will be made available to the public (in the SE library and/or on SE website). Are you content for your response to be made available also?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Sharing responses / future engagement	<p>We will share your response internally with other SE 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 the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>