

## **PRESS RELEASE: 21 April 2005**

### **Independent schools and Public Benefit**

The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) has welcomed the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Bill as a means of ensuing a robust, proportionate and transparent regulatory framework for charities in Scotland. Like all other charities in Scotland, independent schools will have to pass a 'charity test'. To do this, they will have to show that (a) they exist for a 'charitable purpose' – in this case, for the advancement of education – and (b) that they provide public benefit.

The Bill sets out the criteria against which the Regulator will determine public benefit. The amendment to the draft Bill on charges or fees not being 'unduly restrictive', which was agreed by the Communities Committee in parliament yesterday, was implicit in the Bill from the outset.

SCIS believes that independent schools will meet the charity test. Independent schools are deeply committed to the advancement of education, are not run for profit or for personal gain and have a long tradition of charitable giving.

The fees charged by any charitable organisation should be reasonable and justifiable. School fees are set by each individual school at the level needed to provide the education, care, facilities and opportunities they provide. Broadly speaking, independent school fees are in line with the costs of educating a child in the state sector in Scotland (see Note 1). Most independent schools have a strong tradition of supporting families from diverse backgrounds through bursaries and scholarships and actively raise funds to widen access.

Director of SCIS, Judith Sischy, says "Independent schools are a benefit to Scotland. They offer parents a choice, enrich their local communities and make a significant contribution to education in Scotland. As a sector we educate over 31,000 pupils, which saves the public purse an estimated £155 million a year. Add to this the funds distributed in scholarships and bursaries (est £12.5 million a year) and the independent sector actually saves the country over 35 times as much as it receives in financial benefits (est at £4.5 million a year). The schools make a sizeable commitment to the education, economy and social fabric of Scotland. "

**/... Notes:**

**Notes:**

1. Gross local authority revenue expenditure per pupil on secondary education in session 2003/3 (the latest year for which such figures are available) was on average £4,657, excluding funding for additional projects (eg some IT initiatives). The average secondary day fee in independent schools for session 2002/3 was £6,294.
2. The 75 SCIS member schools cater for 97% of the independent pupil population in Scotland, with over 31,000 pupils and 6,500 teaching and support staff. The independent sector is broadly equivalent in size to the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> largest education authority in Scotland (out of a total of 32 local authorities).
3. Overall, the independent sector comprises 4% of the pupil population in Scotland. However this is not evenly spread across all local authority areas. For example, the sector has a particularly significant presence in Edinburgh (24%), Glasgow (12%), Aberdeen (14%), Perth & Kinross (14%) and Dundee (8%) at secondary level.
4. The full SCIS Response to the Draft Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Bill is available from SCIS and can also be found on: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/ctisb140.pdf>  
Examples of Public Benefit Contribution are contained in Annex B.

***For further information please contact:***

***Judith Sischy (Director) or Fiona Valpy (Assistant Director)***

***Scottish Council of Independent Schools***

***21 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7PE***

***Tel: 0131 220 2106 Email: [info@scis.org.uk](mailto:info@scis.org.uk)***

***Web: [www.scis.org.uk](http://www.scis.org.uk)***

***\*\*\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\*\*\****