

Additional Support Needs Review

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to provide information to elected members of the proposed review of Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision by Education Services and to outline the proposed review methodology, timescales and engagement.
- 1.2 A planned review of key aspects of ASN provision, scheduled to take place between February and June 2015 aims to ensure that a service is in place which effectively and efficiently meets the needs of all learners in a time of severe financial constraint. The council has a responsibility to discharge its obligations in relation to education legislation, as prescribed in both the Standards in Scotland's schools etc. Act and the Additional Support for Learning Act and in doing so seek to do this to a high standard.
- 1.3 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places duties on local authorities, and other agencies, to provide additional support where needed to enable any child or young person to benefit from education.
- 1.4 All staff within the Education Service have a responsibility to meet additional support needs. A child or young person with additional support needs is defined under the terms of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 as follows:
- A child or young person has additional support needs for the purposes of this Act where, for whatever reason, the child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support to benefit from school education provided or to be provided for the child or young person.*
- 1.5 In meeting additional support needs, all professionals should also be aware of the provisions within The Equality Act 2010.
- 1.6 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is the most recent legislation impacting on services directed at meeting additional support needs. Guidance is emerging at present and will require to be considered alongside the legislative context described above.
- 1.7 There is a high level of inclusion within Argyll and Bute with children and young people with a wide range of complex and challenging needs effectively

supported within their local schools. At January 2011, only 47 children and young people from Argyll and Bute were educated in specialist day and residential placements out with the authority. Since that time this number has been further reduced by 50% with approximately 23 children and young people placed in external specialist resources at the present time. This number has remained relatively stable over the last 18 months. Parklands School in Helensburgh is the only free standing special school within the authority.

- 1.8 Until June 2010, centrally funded support teachers were organised in Area Network Support Teams (ANST) and were line managed by area coordinators. Following a review of ANST arrangements, these teams were disbanded and the support teachers came under the line management of Head Teachers. The Area Coordinators were replaced by Area Principal Teachers (APTs).
- 1.9 To ensure the success of the inclusive approach to meeting needs, significant resources are targeted directly to schools where staff work together to employing creative and flexible approaches to meeting needs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
 - a) endorse the approach being taken by Education Services in taking forward the review of Additional Support Needs
 - b) endorse that Education Services progress an ASN review as outlined in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.6, and
 - c) request that Education Services presents a progress report for consideration at the Community Services Committee meeting of June 2015.

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 A planned review of key aspects of ASN provision, scheduled to take place between February and June 2015 aims to ensure that a service is in place which effectively and efficiently meets the needs of all learners in a time of severe financial constraint. The council has a responsibility to discharge its obligations in relation to education legislation, as prescribed in both the Standards in Scotland's schools etc. Act and the Additional Support for Learning Act and in doing so seek to do this to a high standard.
- 3.2 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places duties on local authorities, and other agencies, to provide additional support where needed to enable any child or young person to benefit from education.
- 3.3 All staff within the Education Service has a responsibility to meet additional support needs. A child or young person with additional support needs is defined under the terms of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 as follows:
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- 3.4 The 2009 Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act's reference to school education links both the 1980 Education (Scotland) Act and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000. The 2000 Act requires the education authority to ensure that school education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential. The 2000 Act established, and the 2004 Act built upon, a 'presumption of mainstream', that is, a presumption in favour of providing mainstream education for all children.
- 3.5 In meeting additional support needs, all professionals should also be aware of the provisions within The Equality Act 2010.
- 3.6 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is the most recent legislation impacting on services directing at meeting additional support needs. Guidance is emerging at present and will require to be considered alongside the legislative context described above.

- 3.7 There is a high level of inclusion within Argyll and Bute with children and young people with a wide range of complex and challenging needs effectively supported within their local schools. At January 2011, only 47 children and young people from Argyll and Bute were educated in specialist day and residential placements outwith the authority. Since that time this number has been further reduced by 50% with approximately 23 children and young people placed in external specialist resources at the present time. This number has remained relatively stable over the last 18 months. Parklands School in Helensburgh is the only free standing special school within the authority.
- 3.8 Until June 2010, centrally funded support teachers were organised in Area Network Support Teams (ANST) and were line managed by area coordinators. Following a review of ANST arrangements, these teams were disbanded and the support teachers came under the line management of Head Teachers. The Area Coordinators were replaced by Area Principal Teachers (APTs).
- 3.9 To ensure the success of the inclusive approach to meeting needs, significant resources are targeted directly to schools where staff work together to employing creative and flexible approaches to meeting needs.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that Community Services Committee
- a) endorse the approach being taken by Education Services in taking forward the review of Additional Support Needs
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5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 An initial review of provision of additional support needs was held on 5th and 6th February 2015. The aim of this review is to ensure that a service is in place which effectively and efficiently meets the needs of all learners as required by legislation set out in the Additional Support for Learning Acts 2004 and 2009. The council has a responsibility to discharge its obligations in relation to education legislation and seeks to do this to a high standard.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the evaluation/review considers both the areas of policy/practice and budget. With an aim of rationalising the ASN policy and practice framework which meets the demands of current legislative and

national policy requirements and ensures the continued provision of the most effective and efficient service within the Councils budget requirements.

5.3 The Review group will specifically examine the current model of provision and options in the following five areas;

- staffing cover costs for central funded support teachers and ASN assistants;
- allocation process for ASN assistants;
- the role and remit of area Principal Teacher
- Learning Centres, and
- Residential and Day placements

5.4 The Review groups will be comprised of a representative sample of teaching staff from all sectors and areas across the authority area. In addition there will be representation from teaching and non-teaching trades unions and from Social Work. Representatives from Strategic Finance and Human Resources will be on hand to provide appropriate information.

5.5 In addition, two working parties will be established to examine current educational policy around staged intervention and more able pupils. It is anticipated that these working groups will develop an updated policy which, after appropriate consultation, will be adopted as Service policy from August 2015.

5.6 The recommendations arising from the review will be presented to the Community Services Committee in June 2015.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Undertaking this review will allow the service to consider how effective the current system for identifying and allocating levels of support to meet the needs of children and young people with additional and complex needs.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Policy: The report links directly to Outcome 3 in the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement (Education Skills and Training maximises Opportunities for All).

7.2 Financial: The delivery of additional support to meet the identified needs of children and young people has considerable financial implications which may be unsustainable going forward and therefore require to be addressed during 2015-16.

7.3 Legal: The council has a responsibility to discharge its obligations in relation to education legislation, as prescribed in both the Standards in Scotland's schools etc. Act and the Additional

Support for Learning Act and in doing so seek to do this to a high standard.

- 7.4 Personnel: The service costs are predominantly in relation to staff costs, future recommendations will take full account of all personnel implications.
- 7.5 Equalities: In meeting the additional support needs of individual children and young people there is a requirement to be aware of the provisions within The Equality Act 2010.
- 7.6 Risk: Failure to address any issues arising from the completed review presents potential legal, financial, equalities and reputational risks to the council.
- 7.7 Customer Service: Addressing the terms of the review of Additional Support Needs provision may be perceived as a detriment to the current levels of service and may be contentious.

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Councillor Aileen Morton
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