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ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

To: Councillor Wheeler, <u>Convener</u>; Councillor Malik, <u>Vice Convener</u>; Councillor Jennifer Stewart, <u>the Depute Provost</u>; Councillors Alphonse, Bell, Cameron, Lesley Dunbar, Greig, Hutchison, Imrie, Macdonald, MacGregor and Mennie; and Mrs Tracey Blackie (Parent Representative - Primary / ASN), Reverend Shuna Dicks (Church of Scotland Religious Representative), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative), Mr Mike Paul (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools), Mr Rick Sansom (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN) and Miss Pamela Scott (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools); and one vacancy (Third Religious Representative).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 9 September 2020

EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE

The Members of the **EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in the **Council Chamber - Town House** on **THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 10.00 am**.

Please note that due to COVID-19 restrictions, no press and public will be admitted to the meeting. The meeting will be webcast and can be viewed here

FRASER BELL
CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

B U S I N E S S

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1.1   There are no items of urgent business at this time

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2.1   There are no items of exempt business

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1   Members are requested to declare any interests (Pages 5 - 6)

DEPUTATIONS

4.1   There are no requests for deputation at this time

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

5.1   Minute of Previous Meeting of 12 March 2020 (Pages 7 - 10)

NOTICES OF MOTION

6.1   There are no Notices of Motion at this time

COMMITTEE PLANNER

7.1   Committee Business Planner (Pages 11 - 16)

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

8.1   There are no referrals at this time

PERFORMANCE

9.1   Performance Management Framework Report – Education - CUS/20/121 (Pages 17 - 32)

GENERAL BUSINESS

10.1   Education Operational Delivery Committee - Annual Effectiveness Report - COM/20/125 (Pages 33 - 48)

10.2   Lochside Academy - Transport & Safe Routes to Schools Annual Update - COM/20/116 (Pages 49 - 54)

10.3   Universal Credit and Free School Meals - CUS/20/155 (Pages 55 - 58)

10.4   Statutory Consultation Report: Proposed changes to school zones for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy - RES/20/127 (Pages 59 - 74)

10.5   Devolved School Management - OPE/20/112 (Pages 75 - 112)

EHRIAs related to reports on this agenda can be viewed at
Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Stephanie
Dunsmuir, email sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

You must consider at the earliest stage possible whether you have an interest to declare in relation to any matter which is to be considered. You should consider whether reports for meetings raise any issue of declaration of interest. Your declaration of interest must be made under the standing item on the agenda, however if you do identify the need for a declaration of interest only when a particular matter is being discussed then you must declare the interest as soon as you realise it is necessary. The following wording may be helpful for you in making your declaration.

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons ……………

For example, I know the applicant / I am a member of the Board of X / I am employed by…
and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

OR

I have considered whether I require to declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons …………… however, having applied the objective test, I consider that my interest is so remote / insignificant that it does not require me to remove myself from consideration of the item.

OR

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons …………… however I consider that a specific exclusion applies as my interest is as a member of xxxx, which is

- (a)   a devolved public body as defined in Schedule 3 to the Act;
- (b)   a public body established by enactment or in pursuance of statutory powers or by the authority of statute or a statutory scheme;
- (c)   a body with whom there is in force an agreement which has been made in pursuance of Section 19 of the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990 by Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise for the discharge by that body of any of the functions of Scottish Enterprise or, as the case may be, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; or
- (d)   a body being a company:-
  i. established wholly or mainly for the purpose of providing services to the Councillor's local authority; and
  ii. which has entered into a contractual arrangement with that local authority for the supply of goods and/or services to that local authority.

OR

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons……and although the body is covered by a specific exclusion, the matter before the Committee is one that is quasi-judicial / regulatory in nature where the body I am a member of:

- is applying for a licence, a consent or an approval
- is making an objection or representation
- has a material interest concerning a licence consent or approval
- is the subject of a statutory order of a regulatory nature made or proposed to be made by the local authority…. and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 12 March 2020. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE. <u>Present</u>:- Councillor Wheeler, <u>Convener</u>; Councillor Malik, <u>Vice-Convener</u>; Councillor Jennifer Stewart, the Depute Provost; and Councillors Bell, Cameron, Cormie (as substitute for Councillor Alphonse), Lesley Dunbar, Greig, Houghton (as substitute for Councillor Imrie), Hutchison, Macdonald, MacGregor and Mennie. <u>External Members</u>:- Mrs Stephanie Brock (Third Religious Representative), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative), Mr Rick Sansom (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN) and Miss Pamela Scott (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found here.

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its meeting of 16 January 2020 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the committee business planner as prepared by the Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-
to note the planner.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES - ANNUAL PUBLIC PERFORMANCE (STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR) REPORT 2018-19 - COM/20/057

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Operating Officer which provided a summary of the 2018-19 Annual Public Performance (Statutory Performance Indicator) Report outcomes which covered the work of Educational Services over the fiscal period.

EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE
12 March 2020

The report recommended:-
that Committee scrutinise and provide comment on the content of the report, and the detailed Educational Services 2018-19 Annual Public Performance (Statutory Performance Indicator) outcomes contained within Appendices A and B to the report.

The Committee resolved:-
to note the report.

DEVELOPING A CHILD FRIENDLY CITY - OPE/20/056

5.   The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Operating Officer which provided an overview of the work being undertaken by the Council in order for Aberdeen to become a Child Friendly City.

The report recommended:-
that Committee
(a)   note the work undertaken to date to become a Child Friendly City; and
(b)   instruct the Chief Education Officer to establish a representative city-wide pupil forum that would meet regularly and support identification and setting of strategic priorities of the service, discuss a range of relevant issues, and influence the recommendations being brought before the Education Operational Delivery Committee.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to approve recommendations (a) and (b); and
(iii)   to endorse the principles and values of a children's rights-based approach to enable a Child Friendly City with empowered children and young people.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING IN AN EMPOWERED SYSTEM - OPE/20/054

6.   With reference to article 10 of the minute of its meeting of 12 November 2019, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Operating Officer which set out progress on the instruction from Committee that officers work with staff in schools and Trade Unions to address the key themes highlighted in the earlier report, and which took into account the EIS Survey commissioned in May 2019 which surveyed their members around instances of violence and aggression in schools.

The report recommended:-
that Committee –
(a)   note the approach being taken and progress made to date; and
(b)   instruct the Programme Manager to report on the programme within three committee cycles.

EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE
12 March 2020

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to note that the clerk would circulate the EIS survey to the External Members who had not been on the Committee at the time of the original circulation;
(ii)   to note the approach being taken and progress to date;
(iii)   to acknowledge reference to the Educational Institute of Scotland survey report at 3.2.19 on Violence and Abusive Behaviour in Schools and agree that any incidents of violent and abusive behaviour are unacceptable whereby the wellbeing of staff in schools within Aberdeen City Council is being negatively impacted, and request that the Service investigates further these findings to identify the root cause(s) of the issue which is putting staff in schools at risk of harm, both physical and psychological, and identifies mitigating actions to address the issues currently being experienced;
(iv)   to instruct the Programme Manager to report on the above and the programme within three committee cycles; and
(v)   to welcome this review and its focus on the risk of exclusion and low attendance to understand better their root causes.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - OPE/20/053

7.   The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Operating Officer which provided an overview of current proposed approaches to leadership development.

The report recommended:-
that Committee –
(a)   note the direction of travel in the development of leadership capacity;
(b)   instruct the Chief Education Officer to implement and continually review the Professional Learning and Leadership Framework (Draft); and
(c)   instruct the Chief Education Officer to develop a visualisation of the Leadership Professional Learning Officer to align Local and National programmes and the ACC Capability Framework in order to clarify routes to leadership.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

INSPECTION REPORTING - OPE/20/055

8.   The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Operating Officer which provided oversight of Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reporting since the last Committee cycle.

Contained in the report were updates on inspections of Hazlehead Academy and Harlaw Academy, as well as Culter Primary School, Kittybrewster Primary School and Gilcomstoun Primary School and Nursery Class.   The report also highlighted

EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE
12 March 2020

anticipated return inspections for Orchard Brae, Dyce Primary, Kingsford Primary and Milltimber Primary Schools, and provided an update on inspections of Early Learning and Childcare.

The report recommended:-
that Committee –
(a)   note the contents of the report; and
(b)   instruct the Chief Education Officer to continue to support schools to implement improvements in order to address the recommendations made by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.
- **COUNCILLOR JOHN WHEELER, <u>Convener</u>**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1		**EDUCATION OPERATIONAL DELIVERY COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER** The Business Planner details the reports which have been instructed by the Committee as well as reports which the Functions expect to be submitting for the calendar year.							
2	**Report Title**	**Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report**	**Update**	**Report Author**	**Chief Officer**	**Directorate**	**Terms of Reference**	**Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D**	**Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred**
3		**17 September 2020**							
4	Annual Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report for the Committee.	Originally due May 2020	Rob Polkinghorne / Andy MacDonald	Operations / Customer	Operations / Customer	GD 8.5		
5	Devolved School Management	To seek approval of the Devolved School Management Guidelines which will form part of the developing suite of advice in support of empowerment	Originally due May 2020	Caroline Johnstone	Education	Operations	1.1.2		
6	Free School Meals Annual Update	EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Officer Integrated Children's and Family Services to bring a report to Committee prior to the close of each school year (a) detailing the numbers registered for and taking free school meals by school and (b) assessing the progress made by implementing the new workstreams and detailing any required adjustments for the following school year (Due May 2020) EOD Committee 16/05/19 - (i) to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to investigate whether the Council should develop a free school meals policy to address anomalies in legislation as part of the wider Universal Credit impact report due to be presented to Operational Delivery Committee and now EODC in November 2019 and to report back to Committee with details of any proposed policy and indicative costs involved; and (ii) to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to devise and implement a system to ensure that children and young people transitioning from Primary School to Secondary School continue to benefit from the entitlement to free school meals where the entitlement exists and ACC is unaware of any change in family financial circumstances and to report back to Committee with the outcome.	Originally due May 2020	Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Operations	1.1.1		
7	Supporting Learners	To seek approval to align the findings of All our Children and All their Potential recommendations with the work of the ACC Supporting Learners Workstream and implement changes to operating systems in light of restrictions necessary during the recovery phase.		Craig McDermott	Education	Operations	1.1.2		
8	Statutory Consultation Report: Proposed changes to school zones for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy	EOD Committee 16/01/20 - The Committee instructed the Chief Officer Integrated Children's & Family Services to undertake a statutory public consultation on proposals to make changes to the Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy school catchment zones, so that the new housing development at Grandhome was included entirely within the Oldmachar Academy catchment zone with effect from 1 August 2020 and to report back in May 2020 on the outcomes of the consultation	Originally due May 2020	Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.2		

	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
9	Lochside Academy - Transport & Safe Routes to Schools Annual Update	E&CS Committee 16/11/17 - The Committee resolved to instruct the Interim Head of Planning & Sustainable Dev & the Head of Public Infrastructure & Environment to undertake annual updates reviewing the success of provision of free bus travel & the safe routes to school, with the first review to be undertaken in March 2019 (and thereafter annually & reported to Committee at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the end of the fourth school term each year).	Originally due May 2020	Chris Cormack / Vycki Ritson	Strategic Place Planning / Operations and Protective Services	Commissioning / Operations	1.1.1		
10	Accessibility Plan	To present the Accessibility Plan for approval		Mhairi Shewan	Education	Operations	1.1.5		
11	Performance Management Framework Report – Education	To present the performance scorecard for Education in line with the Performance Management Framework		Alex Paterson	Education	Operations	GD 8.5		
12	Education Improvement Journey	EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to track progress against the proposed KPIs in order to report progress to the Education Operational Delivery Committee. Reporting will comprise (a) a yearly progress report based on validated data and (b) a six monthly update to provide an indication of progress to that point.	Originally due May 2020	Reyna Stewart	Data and Insights	Customer	1.1.3	D	Will now be presented in November - officers have advised that based on the reporting timescales for receiving the datasets, the Education Improvement Journey should now be reported to EODC in November 2020 and May 2021, to allow for complete analysis of the data prior to presenting it to Committee
13	School Estate Plan	Council 6/3/18 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to bring a review of the School Estate report within the next 9 months to the Education Operational Delivery Committee, thereafter to forward the report to the Capital Programme Committee (now to be submitted to City Growth and Resources Committee instead of CPC in line with the changes to the Terms of Reference agreed by Council in March 2019)	Originally due May 2020	Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.2	D	In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the new context in which schools are now operating, officers have considered that a refresh of the previously drafted school estate plan would be beneficial, before presenting it to elected members for approval. It is anticipated that this will be ready for reporting to Committee in January 2021.

	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
14	Senior Phase	To seek approval for a more holistic partnership approach to the senior phase offering	Originally due May 2020	Alex Duncan	Education	Operations	1.1.1	D	Officers had initially planned to take forward a report, however are now currently regrouping to better understand the opportunities for young people to help take this forward in the current context - this report will now be presented in November
15	United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child	Every three years as per the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 - Part 1 (section 2) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the "Act") places a duty on a range of public bodies (including all local authorities and health boards) to report, as soon as practicable after the end of each three-year period, on the steps they have taken to secure better or further effect within their areas of responsibility of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requirements.	Originally due May 2020	Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.1	R	Has been dealt with under delegated powers as there is now no requirement for this to go before Committee for approval
16	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of school inspections if required		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.6	R	There have been no inspections conducted due to COVID-19
17	ACC National Improvement Framework	EOD Committee 17/09/19 - to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to provide an overview of progress towards realising the outcomes detailed in the Council's National Improvement Framework Plan through a service update in January 2020 and formally report on progress to the Education Operational Delivery Committee in September 2020		Gael Ross	Education	Operations	1.1.3	R	At the Incident Management Team on 11 June, the National Improvement Framework Plan was approved as Appendix 1 of the Local Phased Delivery Plan. This was circulated to Members for information and so is therefore recommended for removal from the planner
18				**26 November 2020**					
19	Cluster Risk Register - Integrated Children's & Family Services	To report on the cluster risk register		Graeme Simpson	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Operations	GD 8.4		
20	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of school inspections if required		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.6		
21	Exclusion Policy	To present the revised exclusion policy for approval		Mhairi Shewan	Education	Operations	GD 8.1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
2	**Report Title**	**Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report**	**Update**	**Report Author**	**Chief Officer**	**Directorate**	**Terms of Reference**	**Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D**	**Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred**
22	Campus Model for School Provision	Council Budget 03/03/20 - To instruct the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to take forward the proposals for a campus model for future school provision to the Education Operational Delivery Committee on 26 November 2020		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.2		Officers will provide an update to committee setting out our intent/actions to date and future work around this project – service update to be provided prior to November committee meeting
23	Bucksburn Academy School Roll	Council Budget 03/03/20 - To instruct the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to take forward the proposals for the future anticipated school roll increase at Bucksburn Academy to the Education Operational Delivery Committee on 26 November 2020		Maria Thies	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.2	D	Due to Covid-19, this work has not progressed. It is anticipated that the outline business case for this project will be ready to present to the Committee for a decision in January 2021.
24	Supporting Children's Learning in an Empowered System	EOD Committee 12/03/20 - The Committee resolved amongst other things (a) to acknowledge reference to the Educational Institute of Scotland survey report at 3.2.19 on Violence and Abusive Behaviour in Schools and agree that any incidents of violent and abusive behaviour are unacceptable whereby the wellbeing of our staff in schools within Aberdeen City Council is being negatively impacted, and request that the Service investigates further these findings to identify the root cause(s) of the issue which is putting our staff in schools at risk of harm, both physical and psychological, and identifies mitigating actions to address the issues we are currently experiencing; and (b) to instruct the Programme Manager to report on the above and the programme within three committee cycles.		Craig McDermott	Education	Operations	1.1.1		
25	Education Improvement Journey	EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to track progress against the proposed KPIs in order to report progress to the Education Operational Delivery Committee. Reporting will comprise (a) a yearly progress report based on validated data and (b) a six monthly update to provide an indication of progress to that point.	Reports will be presented approx May and November each year	Reyna Stewart	Data and Insights	Customer	1.1.3		
26				**20 January 2021**					
27	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of school inspections if required		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.6		
28				**17 March 2021**					
29	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of school inspections if required		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.6		
30				**03 June 2021**					
31	Education Improvement Journey	EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to track progress against the proposed KPIs in order to report progress to the Education Operational Delivery Committee. Reporting will comprise (a) a yearly progress report based on validated data and (b) a six monthly update to provide an indication of progress to that point.	Reports will be presented approx May and November each year	Reyna Stewart	Data and Insights	Customer	1.1.3		

	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**
32	Annual Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report for the Committee.		Rob Polkinghorne	Operations	Operations	GD 8.5		
33	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of school inspections if required		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.6		
34	**23 September 2021**								
35	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of school inspections if required		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.6		
36	**25 November 2021**								
37	Education Improvement Journey	EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to track progress against the proposed KPIs in order to report progress to the Education Operational Delivery Committee. Reporting will comprise (a) a yearly progress report based on validated data and (b) a six monthly update to provide an indication of progress to that point.	Reports will be presented approx May and November each year	Reyna Stewart	Data and Insights	Customer	1.1.3		
38	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of school inspections if required		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Operations	1.1.6		
39	Cluster Risk Register - Integrated Children's & Family Services	To report on the cluster risk register		Graeme Simpson	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Operations	GD 8.4		

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Agenda Item 9.1

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Performance Management Framework Report – Education Operations
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/20/121
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Martin Murchie
REPORT AUTHOR	Alex Paterson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present Committee with the status of key performance measures relating to the Education Operational cluster.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the performance information contained in the report appendix.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report is to provide members with key performance measures in relation to the Education Operational cluster as expressed within the 2020/21 Council Delivery Plan.

3.2 Introduced in 2019/20, Performance Management Framework Reporting against in-house delivery directly contributing to the City's Local Outcome Agreement Plan, initially through the Operational Delivery and City Growth and Resources Committees, has informed development of the 2020/21 Council Delivery Plan (the Plan) that was agreed by Council on the 3rd March 2020.

3.3 The 'Performance Management' section of the Plan explains how the commitments and deliverables will be supported and scrutinised through the Council's Performance Management Framework, which establishes robust performance management of service delivery. This section also outlines the systematic approach that will be taken during 2020/21 to identify, plan and deliver improvement.

3.4 The Plan also reflects on the revised governance arrangements for Committee reporting, agreed on 2nd March 2020, and the roll-out of Performance Management Framework reporting against those additional Services which directly deliver against the City's Local Outcome Improvement Plan, (alongside Enabling services which support the LOIP) and the introduction of Service Standards against each function/cluster, that builds on the original Framework.

3.5　The Performance Management Framework provides for an amended approach within which performance will be reported to Committees. This presents performance data and analysis within four core perspectives, as shown below, which provides for uniformity of performance reporting across Committees.
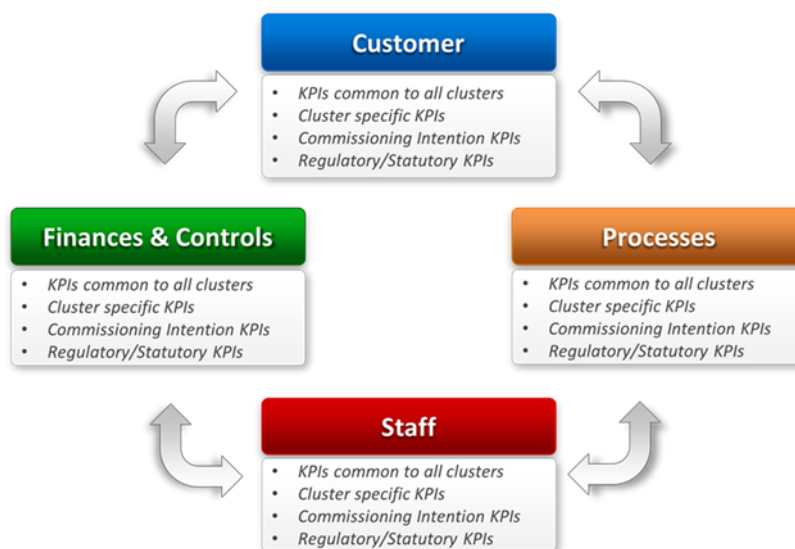
3.6　With recognition of the impact on service delivery, and priority re-allocations of resource arising from the Council's COVID-19 Response, it has not been possible, or appropriate, to fully develop data or reflection for the entire suite of agreed Education Service Standards/KPI's for this initial report.

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3.7　Data and Insights, and service data stewards, having significantly supported the above response at CMT/IMT levels, are in the process of transitioning to the recovery and surveillance phase referred to in the Governance Arrangements Update report to Urgent Business Committee on 30th June 2020.

3.8　This period will see the resumption of ongoing collaborative work to capture data for the wider range of service performance measures and include, where appropriate, further analysis of those performance measures which have been identified as exceptional from the suite of data releases throughout the fiscal year.

3.9　Where exceptions in performance within this report are clearly and directly linked to the Response period noted above and/or the circumstances surrounding application of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 legislation, these are highlighted in commentary in Appendix A.

3.10　As a point of assurance, those detailed attainment and achievement outcomes of pupils, which may fall out with the core Performance Management Framework perspectives, will continue to be captured separately in Education Improvement and National Improvement Framework Plan reports to this Committee.

3.11　Appendix A provides a summary dashboard of current performance across the Education Operations cluster, with reference to recent trends and performance against target.

3.12 Within the summary dashboard the following symbols are used:

Performance Measures

Traffic Light Icon

🟢 On target or within 5% of target

🔺 Within 5% and 20% of target and being monitored

🔴 Below 20% of target and being actively pursued

📈 Data only – target not appropriate

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	None	N/A	N/A
Compliance	No significant related legal risks.	L	Publication of service performance information in the public domain ensures that the Council is meeting its legal obligations in the context of Best value reporting.
Operational	No significant related employee risks.	L	Oversight by Elected Members of core employee health and safety data supports the Council's obligations as an employer
Financial	No significant related financial risks.	L	Overview data on specific limited aspects of the cluster's financial performance is provided within this report
Reputational	Lack of sufficient access to information for citizens	L	Placing of information in the public domain is contributed to by this report. Reporting of service performance

			serves to enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability.
Environment / Climate	None		N/A

7. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The provision of information on cluster performance supports scrutiny of progress against the delivery of the following Policy Statements: 2 - UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation 3 - Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes 4 - Support the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce, seek to gain the highest level of investors in young people accreditation and ensure there is a focus on supporting pupils excel in STEM subjects 7 – Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners in the city.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026.	The data within this report supports the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes in the LOIP, and informs many the improvement projects within the LOIP including to. Increase the number of people employed in growth sectors (digital/ creative; food and drink. life sciences; tourism; social care and health and construction) by 5% by 2021
Prosperous People 95% of children (0-5years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026. 90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026. 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of	The detail within this report supports the delivery of each of the Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 3 to 7 in the LOIP. This includes the following projects: Increase the confidence of school-based staff to recognise and respond to children who require support and directing them to the school Nursing Service to 90% by 2021. Increase the confidence of parents and young people to recognise and seek support in response to deteriorating mental wellbeing by 2022.

attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026. 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026. Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.	Increase the number of young people who effectively transition from primary school to secondary school by 2021 Increase the range and number of accredited courses being provided by schools & partners by 25% by 2021. Increase the number of young people taking up foundation apprenticeships to 142 by 2021. Reduce the number of winter leavers with no positive destination by 50% by 2021. Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 98% 2021 Increase the number of young people living in Quintiles 1,2 and 3 who achieve a sustained positive destination by working with communities to 90% 2022. Increase the number of curricular offerings shaped by school communities by 20%, by 2021. Increase the number of opportunities to discuss and record skills for life, learning and work from S1 by 20%, by 2021. Increase children, young people, and families' awareness and understanding of future skill requirements by June 2021.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The data in this report also impacts on LOIP Stretch Outcome 11- Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026. Respectively, this informs delivery of the following improvement projects: Increase the number of people with autism who are supported to be in education, employment or training by 2021. Increase number of people in local communities promoting wellbeing and good health choices by 2021. 100% of schools have a progressive, cohesive and relevant substance misuse curriculum by 2021.

Regional and City Strategies	The report reflects outcomes aligned to the City's National Improvement Framework for education
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The report reflects outcomes aligned to the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework and Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	The recommendations arising from this report do not require that a full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment be completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Delivery Plan 20/21 – COM/20/052, Council. 3rd March

Covid-19 - Governance Arrangements Update, COM/20/094, 30th June 2020

Local Outcome Improvement Plan

10.   APPENDICES

Appendix A – Performance Summary Dashboard

11.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix A - Performance Management Framework Report – Education Operations

1. Customer

Cluster Level Measures – Local Indicators (Service Standards)

Performance Indicator	Current Status	2020/21 Target
Early learning and childcare settings will meet the National Standard *	No activity in Q1	100%
See commentary below		
Primary, secondary, and special schools will achieve an average evaluation of 'good' or better in core QI *	No activity in Q1	100%
See commentary below		

*Due to COVID-19 provisions, no routine inspections of either Early Learning and Childcare settings or schools-based provision has been undertaken by the Care Inspectorate or Education Scotland since March 2020. It is presently envisaged that a more limited risk-based schedule of inspections will be fully outlined to local authorities by the end of the present calendar year**.**

In the meantime, the Care Inspectorate has introduced a self-evaluation model Key Question 5 which providers are to be asked to submit in due course. This indicator focuses on the implementation of the national Covid-19 guidance in ELC settings (including out of school care and childminders) and establishes how well services are responding to ensure children are secure and confident within different delivery models.

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2019/20	Quarter 4 2019/20	2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Status	Long Trend	2020/21 Target
	Value	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. complaints received (stage 1 and 2) – Education	23	32	93	5	📈	⬆	
% of complaints resolved within timescale stage 1 and 2) – Education	65.2%	56.3%	59.1%	60%	🔴	⬆	75%*

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2019/20	Quarter 4 2019/20	2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Status	Long Trend	2020/21 Target
	Value	Value	Value	Value			
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) – Education	26.1%	21.9%	24.7%	20.0%	📈	⬆	
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) – Education**	2	4	12	0	📈	⬆	

Complaint Handling Note

The Cluster 'within timescale' outcome for Q1, with significantly reduced figures, sits on the boundary of Amber/Red traffic lighting with some reduction in response times from that experienced in the comparable 2018/19 Quarter. This aligns with expectations arising from operational arrangements put in place for Education during the initial COVID-19 period. The proportion of Complaints that were upheld, either in part or as a whole, was showing an improved trend but relates to a single Complaint submission.

* The corporate target for complaint resolution within timescale of 75% had been adopted by all services during the previous phase of the interim Target Operating Model structures and is to be reviewed at Cluster level to accommodate the setting of future improvement aims based on the outcomes from 2019/20. These discussions with services recommence in a timeline commensurate with the Council's completed transition to the Surveillance stage outlined in the report to the Urgent Business Committee on 30th June 2020.

**Lessons learnt referred to in this Appendix are lasting actions taken/changes made to resolve an issue and to prevent future re-occurrence for example amending an existing procedure or revising training processes.

Cluster Level Measures - 2019-20 Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	2019/20 Target
	Value	Value	Value				
Initial School Leaver Destinations - % school leavers from publicly funded schools in positive initial destinations by academic year	91.1%	91.8%	93.7%	✅	⬆	⬆	94.4%

Performance Measure	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	2019/20 Target
Education Inspections - % of positive evaluations of Quality Reference Indicators from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reports of publicly funded Early Learning Centres, primary, secondary, and special schools per financial year	95.8%	87.7%	93.4%	✅	⬆	⬆	96.0%
Early Years Inspections - % of positive evaluations of Quality Reference Indicators from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reports of publicly funded Early Learning and Childcare per financial year	97.7%	90.0%	98.1%	✅	⬆	⬆	98.0%

2019=20 Performance Indicator Service Analysis

Leaver Initial Destinations

The percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination is showing a statistically significant increase on the previous academic year with an improvement of 1.9% to 93.7%.

The figures for those entering Employment (18.5% to 17.7%) fell by less than 1 percentage point with a similar marginal reduction in Training destinations from 2.2% to 2.0% Entry into Higher and Further Education combined have risen year-on-year (+ 3.6% to 73.1 %) with the former showing a marginal decrease and Further Education noting an increase of just under 6%.

The proportion of leavers who were Unemployed Seeking Work experienced its most significant annual improvement (from 6.9% to 4.0%) over the course the measure to date. The percentages of leavers in Voluntary Work, Personal Skills Development, Not Seeking Work and in an Unknown Destination are effectively unchanged comprising 3.2% of the total destinations (2.5% in the prior year)

Pending release of the National Participation Measure data for 2019/20 which captures the destination outcomes for all 16-19 year-olds, the Follow-Up Destinations figures, published in June, also noted a relative and absolute gain in school leavers destinations at the six month post-school evaluation point, placing the City in the upper 50% for this measure nationally for the first time.

It is critical to note that all these datasets evaluate outcomes which fully or largely pre-date implementation of the COVID-19 legislation in March 2020 although some material impact from the crisis may be expected against the NPM above, given that employees in the age range 16-24 years, and particularly those in service positions, were amongst the first to be affected by reductions in business activity,

Inspections of Education Provision

The total number of Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspections of settings undertaken for the 2019/20 fiscal period was 62, an increase of thirteen evaluations on the previous year. From these inspections, 93.4% of the Quality Reference Indicators (QRI)* examined (170 of the total of 182) were rated as meeting the requirements for an evaluation of 'Adequate' or 'Satisfactory' and above, an improvement of 5.7% on 2018-19.

This figure also encompasses an improvement in the combined proportion of Indicator assessments at Good or Above from 50.6% in 2018-19 to 63.7%, closely matching the previous time-series high in 2017-18, although that year is not directly comparable as it pre-dates introduction of the new National ELC Standards

Inspections of Early Learning and Childcare Provision (also see Contextual Narrative below)

With an overall outcome of 98.1%, the 2019-20 result is above that of each of the previous five years of this measure and is indicative of a new baseline in performance against which future evaluations of improvement should be based.

The total number of Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspections of settings undertaken for the period was 55. Of these, 52 inspections resulted in positive outcomes against the full suite of core QRI reviewed with three Care Inspectorate inspections identifying areas for specific improvement.

From these inspections, 153 of the 156 QRI examined were rated as meeting the requirements for an evaluation of 'Adequate' or 'Satisfactory' and above. This figure encompasses an improvement in the combined proportion of Indicator assessments at Good or Above from 52.9% in 2018-19 to 68.8%

*Quality Reference Indicators are specific areas of assessment covering the main quality themes of the inspection process. Depending on the nature of the inspection (announced/unannounced/follow-up) the inspection regime may address either part, or the entirety, of the suite of Indicators.

Early Learning and Childcare Inspections Contextual Narrative

From August onwards, local authorities and funded partner organisations will be expected to continue to use the principles and criteria of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard as a framework to shape local funded ELC delivery. Until full roll-out of the 1140 hours, application of the National Standard across all funded ELC provision (expected as of August 2020), has been postponed and some flexibility on certain aspects of inspection of the Standard for funded provision is to be applied to support provider sustainability

1.	**Processes**

Cluster Level Measures – Local Indicators (Service Standards)

Performance Indicator	Current Status	2020/21 Target
We will meet all requests for early learning and childcare placements	✅	100%
The present limitations placed on ELC providers by current COVID-19 restrictions have had some impact on the timing of placement commencement arising from phasing of uptake and extended induction periods but all requests submitted at the original registration date for Term 1 have been provided with an offer of a place		
We will meet all requests for primary and secondary school placements *	✅	100%
Presently all requests for primary and secondary placements are being met with a small number of requests being addressed through the placing appeals system which experienced some processing impact during the initial lockdown.		
We will process requests for additional support to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people within 40 days*	📈	100%
Given recent commencement of the school term, it is not possible to provide data against this measure at this point. To date, a limited number of requests for additional support, which were not previously identified/addressed through pupil wellbeing assessment, have been submitted as part of the school induction/transition process.		

*Additional guidance on, and changes to, the legislative framework around school placing requests and appeals was published on 8th June 2020 which provided for revisions to the format of appeal hearings and extensions to the statutory timelines within which authorities must respond to placing challenge. Coronavirus (COVID-19): school placing requests and appeal hearings - guidance for local authorities that has assisted Aberdeen City Council to meet these obligations. This guidance also reflected on the measures relating to Additional Support for Learning (Placing in Schools) as amended by the statutory instrument The Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020

Cluster Level Measures – 2019-20 Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend	2019/20 Target
	Value	Value	Value				
Early Years Provision- % of eligible population allocated ACC funded Ante Pre-school and Pre-school nursery places in local authority and partner provider Early Learning and Childcare settings	87.45%	93.76%	93.95%	✅	⬆	⬆	96.0%

2019-20 Performance Indicator Service Analysis

Allocation of Early Learning and Childcare Provision

The combined percentage of registered and funded allocations against the eligible 3 and 4 year-old populations rose marginally from 93.76% in the previous year to 93.95%, representing the greatest proportion of eligible population placed in the current measure's six year timeline (changes to the calculation process were introduced in 2014-15)

Ante Pre-school Allocations: There has been a slight deterioration against this indicator over the last year from 92.8% to 91.63% of the eligible 3-year-old population being registered and allocated funded ante pre-school places. An increase in the number of places allocated to out-of-authority children (who are provision eligible but excluded from the calculations) may have been an influence in this variance.

Pre-school Allocations There was an increase in the proportion of eligible 4-year olds within the population that were registered for funded early learning and childcare places. The figure has improved from 94.75% to 96.13%

2. Staff

Performance Measure	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	Status	Long Trend - Monthly
	Value	Value	Value		
Average number of working days lost through sickness absence per FTE employee – Early Years*	4.98	4.90	6.27	✅	

Performance Measure	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	Status	Long Trend - Monthly
	Value	Value	Value		
Average number of working days lost through sickness absence per FTE employee – Primary/Secondary Education*	4.55	4.48	5.10	✅	

*These figures represent a new data baseline derived from CORE HR system development which does not take into account the influence of seasonal adjustment aligned to the previous 12 month rolling average as they are calculated on a month by month basis. As such, these data are not directly relatable to prior monthly figures and continue to be scrutinised for pattern inconsistencies.

For the comparable monthly periods, corporate level absences were April: 7.02 days, May:7.35 days and June: 8.03 days which, in the interim, are being used to generate the Status of these measures pending additional evaluation of appropriate 2020/21 improvement objectives within these services.

Performance Measure	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	Status	Long Trend - Monthly
	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Education	2,809.44	2.786.54	2,855.22	📈	

Performance Measure	2019/20	Quarter 3 2019/20	Quarter 4 2019/20	Quarter 1 2019/20	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Annual Baseline Value	Value	Value	Value		
H&S Employee Reportable by Cluster – Education	6	2	2	0	✅	⬆️
H&S Employee Non-Reportable by Cluster – Education	344	117	85	0	📈	⬆️
H&S Near Misses by Cluster – Education	507	184	108	0	📈	⬆️

3. Finance & Controls ^

Performance Indicator	April		May		June	
	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status
Staff Expenditure – % spend to full year budget profile – Education*	8.95%	⚠️	17.56%	⚠️	26.04%	✅

Finance and Controls Note

^Work is presently ongoing to develop publication of additional individual cluster-based Control measures which will be reflected in future 2020/2021 performance reporting.*Full function level data relating to capital spend and financial performance is provided separately through City Growth and Resources (Finance) reporting.

Cluster Level Measures – 2018-19 National Benchmark Indicators* (Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework)

Performance Measure	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Quartile Status	Status	2018/19 National Figure
	Value	Value	Value			
Cost per Primary School Place	£4,958	£5,170	£5,166	2	✅	£5,250
Cost per Secondary School Place	£7,378	£7,273	£7,445	4	✅	£7,157
Cost per Pre-school Registration	£5,026	£5,433	£4,399	2	✅	£5,070

*Final benchmarking data release of April 2020, with interim data being reflected in the national level Local Government Benchmarking Report published in February 2020

National Benchmark Indicators Service Analysis

Cost per Primary school place

The cost per place of primary school education is statistically unchanged with some closing to the national figure and an improvement in quartile ranking from Quartile 3 to Quartile 2 (from 19th to 15th ranked, with ranking being calculated from lowest to highest cost)

Cost per Secondary school place

Secondary school cost per place is ranked 24th, the same as in the previous year, with a value increase of 2.37% that is below the national level of +4.43% and a continuous the three-year trend of closing of differential to the national figure. The City's expenditure level per pupil for 2018/19 is now more effectively aligned with that of

the 'Four Cities' average of £7,321, from a position in 2015/16 where it exceeded this benchmark by £602, with relative improvement being delivered in each subsequent year.

Cost per pre-school registration

The level of year-to-year cost per pre-school registration has improved by just over 19% to £4,399 in 2018/19 from £5,433 in 2017/18 with both the Numerator (Expenditure) and Denominator (number of places) having an impact. Consequently, the City's ranking profile has improved from Quartile 4 (25th ranked) to just below the 1st Quartile in 10th position and is the most improved in Scotland in terms of positional change.

PI Status		Long Term Trends		Short Term Trends	
	Alert		Improving/Increasing		Improving/Increasing
	Warning		No or Limited Change		No or Limited Change
	OK		Getting Worse/Decreasing		Getting Worse/Decreasing
	Unknown				
	Data Only				

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Education Operational Delivery Committee Annual Effectiveness Report
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/125
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne / Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Fraser Bell
REPORT AUTHOR	Stephanie Dunsmuir
TERMS OF REFERENCE	GD 8.5

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the annual report of the Education Operational Delivery Committee to enable Members to provide comment on the data contained within.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Committee:-

2.1 provide comments and observations on the data contained within the annual report; and

2.2 note the annual report of the Education Operational Delivery Committee.

3. **BACKGROUND**

Annual Reports on Committee Terms of Reference

3.1 The annual committee effectiveness reports were introduced in 2018/19 following a recommendation from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as part of the Council's work towards securing that organisation's accreditation in governance excellence. The Terms of Reference set out that each Committee will review its own effectiveness against its Terms of Reference through the mechanism of the annual report.

3.2 The annual effectiveness reports were mentioned by CIPFA in their recent report which awarded the Mark of Excellence in Governance accreditation to Aberdeen City Council. CIPFA highlighted the implementation of the annual effectiveness reports as a matter of good practice in governance and were encouraged that, during consideration of the reports at Committee and Council, Members had made suggestions for improvements to the reports in future years.

3.3 As well as the CIPFA Accreditation, Committee Services also recently won SOLAR Administration Team of the Year 2020 in March 2020 in recognition of

the introduction of the annual committee effectiveness reports and the process which allows Committees to examine how they can improve the way they do business, while providing assurance that they are undertaking their role effectively.

3.4   Data from the annual effectiveness reports was used to inform the review of the Scheme of Governance, ensuring that Committee Terms of Reference were correctly aligned, and identifying any areas of the Terms of Reference which had not been used throughout the year in order that they could be reviewed and revised if necessary. The information from the effectiveness reports will also be used to feed into the Annual Governance Statement.

3.5   The reports provide a mechanism for each committee to annually review its effectiveness, including data on attendance, any late reports, referrals to Council and the number of times officer recommendations were amended, and to ensure that it is following its Terms of Reference.

3.6   Similarly, recording the sections of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which apply to each report allows Members to be aware of the direct impact of any proposals before them on the LOIP, and gives a general overview at the end of each year of the number of reports which have had an impact on the LOIP outcomes. Officers also actively review the data gathered to ensure that it aligns to the Council's operating model and decisions taken by the Council throughout the year. This part of the annual report will be expanded for the next year of reporting to incorporate the changes to the outcomes section of the committee report template. That section now asks report authors to consider the implications of their report for the Council Delivery Plan, which incorporates the LOIP outcomes.

3.7   While the above is one section of the annual effectiveness report template which officers aim to amend for future reporting, any comments from Members on additional areas of data that should be considered would be welcomed to ensure that Members are presented with meaningful data.

3.8   The annual report for 2019/2020 is therefore appended for the Committee's consideration. Following consideration by the Committee, the report will be submitted to Council in December for noting.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   There are no direct financial consequences from the recommendations of this report.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A		
Compliance	Failure to submit this report to EODC means that the committee would not be complying with the instruction from Council that all committees receive such a report each year.	L	Committee is given the opportunity to consider the report and provide feedback on any amendments Members would wish to see in the content so that this can be taken on board for next year's Scheme of Governance review
Operational	N/A		
Financial	N/A		
Reputational	N/A		
Environment / Climate	N/A		

7.   OUTCOMES

There are no links to the Council Delivery Plan, however the committee effectiveness annual reports link to the Scheme of Governance, by ensuring that each committee is fulfilling its Terms of Reference.

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

10.   APPENDICES

10.1   Education Operational Delivery Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2019/2020.

11.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Education Operational Delivery Committee

Annual Effectiveness Report

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 I am pleased to present the second annual effectiveness report for the Education Operational Delivery Committee. As Members will be aware, as part of their interim assessment of the Council's governance arrangements in 2016, CIPFA recommended that Committees review the extent to which they had operated within their Terms of Reference, through an annual report. This had been an aspiration for some time, representing good practice in governance terms. I am delighted that this year, the Council was the first in Scotland to be awarded the CIPFA Mark of Excellence in Governance, and that the annual effectiveness report was highlighted by CIPFA as an example of good governance. The annual effectiveness report also informs the annual review of the Council's Scheme of Governance and enables officers to identify if any changes are required, for example, to the Committee Terms of Reference.

1.2 As part of the 2020 review, changes were made to the Education Operational Delivery Committee Terms of Reference to provide greater clarity and those will be monitored throughout the year and taken into consideration during next year's review and the preparation of the third annual committee effectiveness report.

1.3 The annual report is a good mechanism for the Committee to support the Council's improvement journey by demonstrating the ways that the Committee contributes to the Council Delivery Plan and Local Outcome Improvement Plan, whilst also providing the opportunity to reflect on the business of the Committee over the past year and to look to the Committee's focus for the year ahead.

1.4 Throughout the year, the Committee has worked collectively to approve and monitor the in-house delivery of educational services, scrutinise performance and make improvements to those services. In addition, the Committee has helped to ensure improvement to the Council's public performance recording data, in line with outcomes and intentions set.

1.5 Officers have supported the Committee's external members through hosting briefing sessions which enable external members to ask officers questions about any aspect of education along with seeking clarity on reports within the committee business planner. This approach has strengthened the role of external members and encouraged scrutiny through questioning at Committee.

Councillor John Wheeler
Convener, Education Operational Delivery Committee

2. THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

2.1 The role of the Committee is to approve and monitor the in-house delivery of educational services, scrutinise performance and make improvements to those services.

2.2 Although Council approved new Terms of Reference for the Committee in March 2020, this reporting period relates to the previous Terms of Reference which are appended to the report.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE DURING 2019/2020

3.1 The Education Operational Delivery Committee has 13 Elected Members and 7 External Members – three religious representatives, two teacher representatives and two parent representatives. The composition is presented below.

Committee political balance (seats)

Party	Seats
Independence Alliance Group	1
Aberdeen Labour	3
Liberal Democrats	1
Scottish Conservative and Unionist	3
Scottish National Party	5
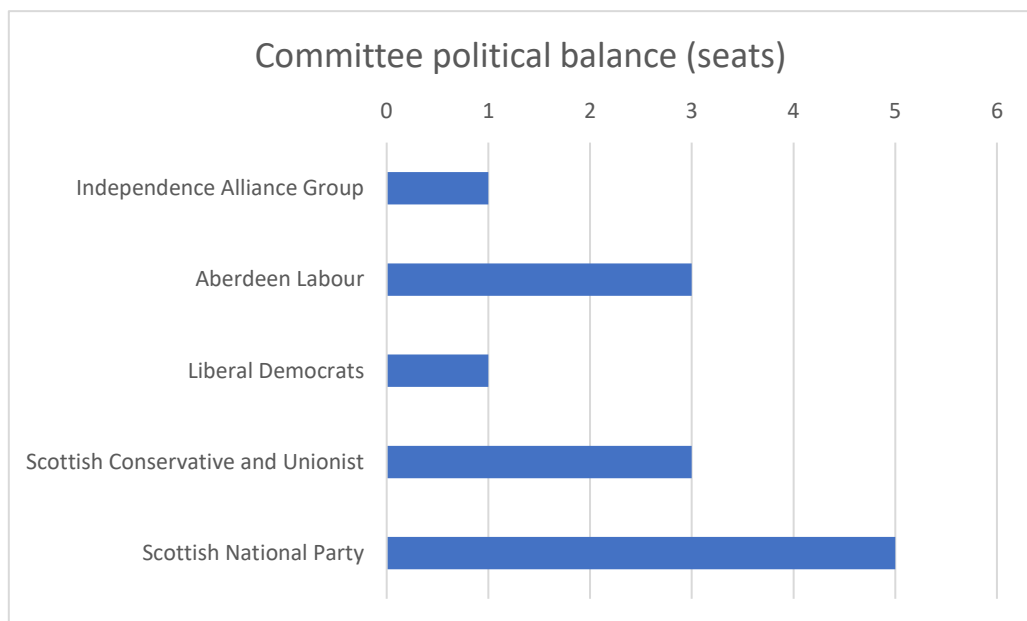
4. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

4.1 Councillors Bell, Cameron, Mennie and MacGregor all joined the Committee during the reporting period. Reverend Shuna Dicks became the new Church of Scotland representative, and Tracey Blackie and Rick Sansom took up their places as the two new parent representatives, following nomination by the Aberdeen City Parent Forum.

5. MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substituted
Councillor Alphonse	5	3	2
Councillor Bell	2	2	
Mrs Tracey Blackie	2	1	n/a
Mrs Stephanie Brock	5	5	
Mrs Louise Bruce	3	2	
Councillor Cameron	4	4	
Councillor Cooke	3	2	1
Reverend Shuna Dicks	4	2	n/a
Councillor Donnelly	3	3	
Councillor Lesley Dunbar	5	3	2
Councillor Greig	5	5	
Councillor Hutchison	5	5	
Councillor Imrie	5	3	2
Councillor Macdonald	5	5	
Councillor MacGregor	3	3	
Councillor Catriona Mackenzie	1	1	
Councillor Malik	5	4	1
Councillor Mennie	2	2	
Mr John Murray	5	5	
Councillor Alex Nicoll	2	2	
Mr Colm O'Riordan	1	1	
Mr Mike Paul	0	0	n/a
Mr Anthony Rafferty	2	1	n/a
Mr Rick Sansom	2	2	
Miss Pamela Scott	5	4	1
Councillor Stewart	5	4	1
Councillor Wheeler	5	5	

6. MEETING CONTENT

6.1 During the 2019/2020 reporting period (29 April 2019 to 30 April 2020), the Committee had 5 meetings and considered a total of 24 reports.

6.2 **Terms of Reference**

Of the 24 reports received the following table details how the reports aligned to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.
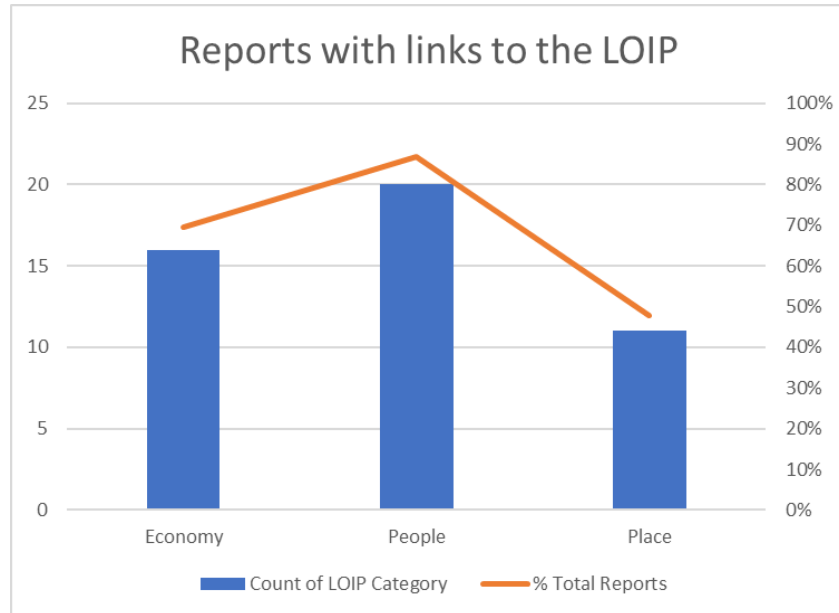
Terms of Reference	Count of Terms of Reference
General Delegations To Committees 7.1	1
General Delegations To Committees 7.4	1
General Delegations To Committees 7.5	1
Purpose of Committee 1	9
Purpose of Committee 3	1
Remit of Committee 1	9
Remit of Committee 2	4
Remit of Committee 3	1
Remit of Committee 4	0
Remit of Committee 5	9
Remit of Committee 6	3
Remit of Committee 7	0

6.3 During the course of 2019/2020 the Education Operational Delivery Committee received reports under each of the Terms of Reference, bar Remits 4 (provide evidence to the Strategic Commissioning Committee, as requested, on the contribution of in house services to outcomes) and 7 (Note proposed peer reviews and inspections by the Local Area Network for the cycle). This would indicate that the Committee has discharged its role throughout the course of the reporting period.

6.4 The majority of reports have fallen under Purpose 1 (To approve and monitor the in house delivery of educational services, scrutinise performance and make improvements to those services), Remit 1 (hold the organisation to account for the in house delivery of all educational services) and Remit 5 (approve improvements to operational delivery where officers do not have the power to do so), which is to be expected for a committee whose role is to approve and monitor the in-house delivery of educational services, scrutinise performance and make improvements to those services. As a number of reports fell under Purpose 1, rather than the Remit section, that suggested that the Terms of Reference should be reviewed, as it seemed as though report authors might have been struggling to find a relevant part of the remit to use and had therefore resorted to the more general Purpose section in many cases. As a result, clarified and expanded Terms of Reference for the Education Operational Delivery Committee were proposed and these were approved by Council in March 2020. This should assist officers in identifying how their proposals link to the remit of the Committee and the wider Council Delivery Plan.

6.5 **Local Outcome Improvement Plan**

The following table details of the 24 reports how many had a link to the themes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Reports with links to the LOIP

6.6 Reports and Committee Decisions

The following table details the outcome of the Committee's consideration of the 24 reports presented to it throughout the year.

Terms of reference	Total	% Total Reports
Confidential	0	0%
Exempt	0	0%
Number of reports where the Committee has amended officer recommendations	2	8%
Number and percentage of reports approved unanimously	23	96%
Number of reports or service updates requested by members during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in forward planner	2	8%
Number of decisions delayed for further information	0	0%
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour and the ethical values of Public Life	0	0%
Number of late reports received by the Committee (i.e. reports not available for inspection by members of the public at least three clear days before a meeting)	0	0%
Number of referrals to Council, or other Committees in terms of previous Standing Order 33.1	0	0%

6.7 Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public

Number of notices of motion	0
Number of times Standing Orders were suspended and the specific Standing Orders suspended	0
Standing order number (ref)	N/A
Number of deputations	1
Number of petitions considered	0
Number of Members attending meetings of the committee as observers	11
Number of Meetings held by the Convener with other Conveners, relevant parties, to discuss joint working and key issues being raised at other Committee meetings	Weekly meetings with Chief Operating Officer and Director of Customer Services Weekly meetings with Conveners of Strategic Commissioning Committee and City Growth and Resources Committees Monthly meetings with Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services and Chief Officer - Education Monthly meetings with all relevant Chief Officers

7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Throughout the course of 2019-2020 there have been briefing sessions for Members on performance data and school inspections (local ward Members).

7.2 External Members are also provided with separate briefing sessions with officers prior to each Committee to allow them the opportunity to discuss the upcoming agenda. They were also offered the opportunity to attend a session on the performance data presented to Committee.

7.3 Further development opportunities will be developed for 2020-2021 based on Committee business, officer proposals and Member feedback.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

8.1 No declarations of interest were made by Councillors during the reporting period. Two declarations were made by two of the External Members during the reporting period. Information in respect of declarations of interest is measured to evidence awareness of the requirements to adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the responsibility to ensure fair decision-making.

9. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

9.1 During the course of the year there has been statutory consultation with the public in respect of proposals to make changes to the Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy school catchment zones, so that the new housing development at Grandhome was included entirely within the Oldmachar Academy catchment zone. Further statutory consultation in respect of proposals to establish a new primary school at Countesswells; and to relocate Milltimber School and St Peter's RC School was also undertaken, and the results considered by Committee in September 2019.

9.2 There was further public consultation on the proposals to bring the summer holiday period forward by a week in future years. As a result of that consultation, Committee agreed to maintain the current holiday pattern for the next five years with no change to the timing of the summer school holiday.

9.3 The Committee received a report following a consultation undertaken with staff to determine the effectiveness of current approaches in meeting the needs of those with Additional Support Needs. That report made recommendations on how to further strengthen the system as the Council worked towards an empowered system, and the Committee will receive a follow up report on this later in the year.

9.4 As part of the ongoing work to become a Child Friendly City, the Committee has approved the establishment of a representative city-wide pupil forum that will meet regularly and support identification and setting of strategic priorities of the service, discuss a range of relevant issues and influence the recommendations being brought before the Education Operational Delivery Committee.

9.5 The External Members appointed to the Committee also ensure that there is representation on the Committee for parents, teachers and religious organisations, which ensures that those sections of the community have an avenue into the decision-making process.

10. OFFICER SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

Officer	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitute Attendances
Chief Operating Officer	5	5	
Director of Customer Services	5	5	
Chief Officer - Integrated Children's & Family Services	5	4	1
Chief Education Officer	5	5	
Team Leader - Governance	5	5	

11. EXECUTIVE LEAD'S COMMENTS

11.1 In last year's report, I had commented that a number of motions and amendments were submitted on the day of the committee and in some instances very shortly before the start time of committee. In 2019/20, officers worked with Elected Members ahead of the meeting to assist them with the preparation of any motions and amendments, and for those which arose at the meeting, also sought short adjournments to enable robust consideration by officers of such motions and amendments. This helped to further enhance the decision-making process for Elected Members by ensuring they were able to make fully informed decisions.

11.2 The Committee has operated well throughout the year. It can be seen from the statistics in the annual report that all business was able to be considered in public, which assists in maintaining transparency in the democratic process.

11.3 Following feedback from officers and Members throughout the last year, the Council recently approved new Terms of Reference for the Committee which will help to provide greater clarity in relation to the role of EODC and these will be monitored throughout the year in preparation for next year's review.

11.4 This year, officers added a standing item to the EODC agenda for inspection reporting, and the Committee now receives regular reports on Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reporting to allow Members to have oversight of this area.

12. NEXT YEAR'S FOCUS

12.1 In March 2020, Council approved new Terms of Reference and a further review will be reported to Council in March 2021. Throughout the next reporting year, we will review the Terms of Reference in line with the business submitted to the Committee and reflect on whether any areas require refinement moving forward to ensure the efficient operation of the Committee.

12.2 The main areas of business for the Committee over the next year will be the consideration of a revised exclusion policy; and the Council Budget instructions in respect of a campus model for school provision; and the review of the Bucksburn Academy school roll. The Committee will also consider the School Estate plan. Officers need to revisit the future planning of the estate, given that schools are now operating in a significantly different context than prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown and the school estate plan needs to reflect this new context. The Committee will also receive a further update on the work being undertaken in relation to Supporting Children's Learning in an Empowered System.

**Previous Education Operational Delivery Committee Terms of Reference
Approved by Council on 4 March 2019**

PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE

1. To approve and monitor the in house delivery of educational services, scrutinise performance and make improvements to those services.

2. To ensure improvement to the Council's Public Performance Recording data, in line with outcomes and intentions set, for educational services.

REMIT OF COMMITTEE

The Committee will, for internal educational services:-

1. hold the organisation to account for the in house delivery of all educational services;
2. approve and monitor the in house delivery of educational services and take action to ensure that such performance is in line with the outcomes set by Council and the Strategic Commissioning Committee;
3. improve results for Public Performance Recording, where this is in line with the Council's own improvement goals, by scrutinising Key Performance Indicators through rigorous performance management arrangements and ensuring that such performance:-
    3.1   is done in a manner which places the customer first and ensures the expected contribution to outcomes;
    3.2   improves the Council's position in national tables; and
    3.3   adheres to financial targets.

4. provide evidence to the Strategic Commissioning Committee, as requested, on the contribution of in house services to outcomes;
5. approve improvements to operational delivery where officers do not have the power to do so;
6. explore and approve options for transforming the service delivery model; and
7. note proposed peer reviews and inspections by the Local Area Network for the cycle.

JOINT WORKING WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

The Committee will maintain an awareness of key issues arising through the work of other committees of the Council, through lead officers, conveners and vice conveners working together, and attending other committees as observers. Specifically:-
1. the Strategic Commissioning Committee, the City Growth and Resources Committee and the Education Operational Delivery Committee will cooperate to ensure that the internally commissioned services have clear service specifications, identifying contributions to the LOIP outcomes and that sufficient funding is available to deliver the service specification.

JOINT WORKING WITH NON COUNCIL BODIES

Officers work closely with Internal Auditors, a service contracted from Aberdeenshire Council, and with external providers of assurance such as External Audit, Audit Scotland and external examining bodies. In addition, officers will work with local representative bodies such as the Disability Equity Partnership and the Aberdeen City Youth Council to understand how effectively services are being delivered to customers and how they can be improved.
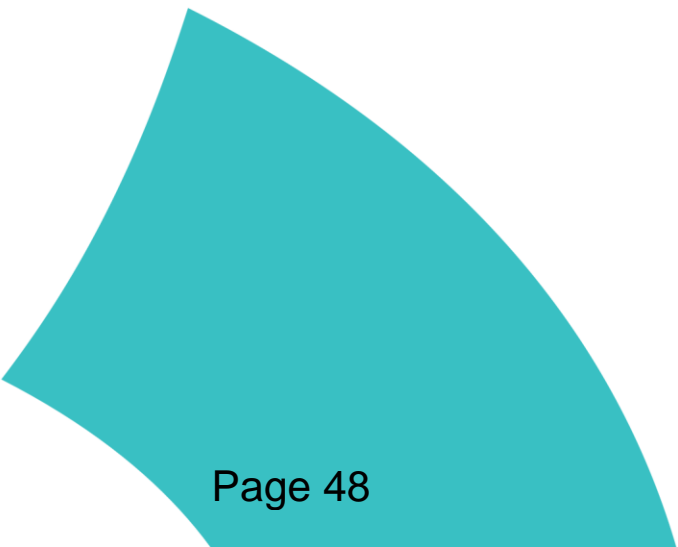
ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Lochside Academy – Transport and Safe Routes to School – Annual Update 2020
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/116
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Mark Reilly
REPORT AUTHOR	Chris Cormack / Vycki Ritson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update members on the performance of the transport services and arrangements for pupils accessing Lochside Academy and on the success of provisions in relation to the safe walking routes to Lochside Academy.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Committee note the outcome of the 2020 annual review for transport and safe routes to school for Lochside Academy.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Background**

3.1.1 At the Education and Children's Services Committee meeting on 16th November 2017, the committee instructed: "*the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development and the Head of Public Infrastructure and Environment to undertake annual updates reviewing the success of the provision of the free bus travel and the safe routes to school, with the first review to be undertaken in March 2019 and thereafter annually at the end of the third school term with the outcome of each review to be reported to the relevant Committee at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the end of the fourth school term each year.*"

3.1.2 The data for this annual update relates to the academic year 2019/20, from August 2019 to July 2020.

3.1.3 As a result Covid-19 and due to the emergency provisions put in place for committee reporting, this report has been delayed in being presented to members. As the Academic school year has commenced no changes to provisions are recommended.

3.2   Current Transport Provision

3.2.1 The Council currently subsidises 5 buses operated by First Aberdeen and First Aberdeen commercially provides 5 bus services (part-subsidised through fare revenue from bus passes) as follows:
- Service 21A: Cove/Charleston – Lochside Academy (Aberdeen City Council) (1 vehicle)
- Service 22A/22C: Balnagask/Torry – Lochside Academy (Aberdeen City Council) (4 vehicles)
- Service 31: Torry – Lochside Academy (First Aberdeen) (2 vehicles)
- Service 181/182/183: Kincorth – Lochside Academy (First Aberdeen) (3 vehicles)

3.2.2 Pupils in Kincorth, Leggart and Torry receive free transport between 07:00 – 18:00 and this is provided as an annual bus pass loaded onto the pupils Accord Card. Pupils in Cove pay to use bus services.

3.3   Transport Performance/Feedback/Recommendations

3.3.1 The transport operated well in the 2019/20 academic year. There has been close partnership working between School, Passenger Transport Unit and First Aberdeen to address any concerns and ensure services operate appropriately. There has been a significant reduction of operational issues in the last academic year as the services have become more established.

3.3.2 The bus pass loaded onto the Accord Card continues to work relatively well, although this is still labour intensive for school staff, due to the volume of lost/damaged cards. No alternative has been progressed to date, this was due to competing priorities both at the Council and First Aberdeen, but further smart ticketing options will continue to be explored with First Aberdeen, including mobile ticketing.

3.3.3 Bus use has been monitored via passenger reports from the ticket machines and by on-site observations. While buses can on occasion run quite full and require pupils to stand, the requirement for standees has been less over the 2019/20 academic year and it is considered that there is enough capacity to accommodate all the passengers.

3.3.4 The services 21A from Cove averages around 50-60 passengers in the morning and 30-40 passengers in the afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 80 passengers on the bus operating in Cove.

3.3.5 The services 22A, 22C and 31 from Leggart, Torry and Balnagask, average around 250–300 passengers in the morning and afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 400 passengers on the buses operating in these areas, so it is considered there is sufficient capacity for the demand.

3.3.6 The services 181, 182 and 183 from Kincorth average around 160–180 passengers in the morning and afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 210 passengers on the buses operating in Kincorth, so it is considered there is sufficient capacity for the demand.

3.3.7 There has been minimal feedback from school and parents over the 2019/20 academic year and no suggestions for changes to transport have been made.

3.3.8 There has been a notable increase in antisocial behaviour on the buses in the 2019/20 academic year, including vandalism to buses. In situations where antisocial behaviour has occurred, School have worked closely with First Aberdeen to identify the children involved and acted promptly to work with the children involved to prevent a repeat. Community policing teams also provided support. There was a marked improvement in behaviour prior to the school closing. This matter will continue to be reviewed and any issues will be dealt with swiftly.

3.3.9 Based on the satisfactory operator performance, passenger volumes being met by the available capacity and minimal levels of feedback, no changes are recommended to the transport provision for the 2020/21 academic year.

3.3.10 The school transport arrangements were approved initially for a period of three years, which will end at summer holidays 2021. Accordingly, next year Members will be required to consider any future transport provision.

3.4 COVID-19 Transport measures

3.4.1 The school time services will continue to operate as local bus services; however these have been re-designated as school only services, which means only school children can travel on these services and no adults will be permitted to travel, this means, in line with dedicated school transport, no physical distancing is required. This is an option, which can only operate in the 2020/21 academic year, as by summer 2021, such services will require to have seatbelts in place.

3.4.2 Children using public transport services, such as those operated for Lochside Academy, should wear a face covering for the duration of all journeys, except for those for whom doing so would create a medical risk.

3.4.3 Transport Providers have appropriate enhanced cleaning regimes in place, in line with public health guidelines.

3.5 Safe Routes to School

3.5.1 There have been no recorded incidents involving a school pupil from Lochside Academy over the period.

3.5.2 No amendments have been identified or made to the routes to school over the past year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The current transport provision for Lochside Academy is met from existing budgets, although the Lochside element represents a considerable proportion, with around 14% of the school transport spend.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	Risk of breaching seatbelts on school transport legislation, if services continue to operate, emergency Covid provisions, into the 2021/22 academic year.	M	Alternative transport delivery will be required. Options are available which will be reviewed if required.
Operational	Risk of not being able to deliver transport for all pupils, if further Covid-19 measures come in restricting capacity on bus services.	M	Further transport would require to be procured.
Financial	As a result of continuing transport services for Lochside Academy there is a significant risk in overspend of the School Transport budget. A risk of increased costs if further Covid-19 measures come in restricting capacity on bus services, requiring more transport to be procured.	H	Officers will work closely with Education to identify reductions in transport to mitigate the risks of overspend. This will be managed in line with business continuity by prioritising transport services and identifying any Covid-19 funding streams from Scottish Government.

Reputational	N/A		N/A	N/A
Environment / Climate	N/A		N/A	N/A

7.   OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposals in this report have no impact on the Council Delivery Plan.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals in this report have no impact in the delivery of Prosperous Economy Outcomes.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 6 in the LOIP. The provision of transport supports wellbeing and safety of all children attending Lochside and supports attendance at school, which will help with wellbeing, prospects and attainment.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 14 – reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026. The provision of transport supports reducing carbon emissions as without the transport provision to Lochside Academy, it is likely more children would be transported by car to school.
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals in this report support the Local Transport Strategy - a high quality public transport system is important for any thriving economy in transporting people to work and education and directly support the business and education sectors and ensures the workforce can travel effectively and that all have access to appropriate education opportunities and access to all facilities in a cost-effective way. The provision of transport to Lochside Academy will ensure appropriate access to education.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The proposals in this report have no impact on UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A

10. APPENDICES

10.1 N/A

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Educational Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Universal Credit and Free School Meals
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/20/155
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Derek McGowan
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Carnegie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report meets the Education Operational Delivery Committee's request for investigation of whether the Council should develop a free school meals policy to address anomalies in legislation following the implementation of Universal Credit.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee: -

2.1 agree to introduce a policy of extending free school meal entitlement to families in receipt of Universal credit in respect of:

a) Single claimants working less than 16 hours per week with a gross annual income of less than £16,105; and,
b) Joint claimants working less than 24 hours per week with a gross annual income of less than £16,105.

2.2 instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to implement the extended provision from 26 October 2020.

3. **Free School Meals**

3.1 Approximately 8,385 children receive free school meals each day in Aberdeen based on the national entitlement criteria. Free school meals are vital to the health and development of children in low income families. Providing free school meals contributes to towards reducing poverty, improving attainment and general wellbeing.

3.2 Universal Credit has implications for low-income families and entitlement to free school meals. Under the Child Tax Credit and Working Tax legacy benefits families are entitled to free school meals where a parent is in receipt of –

- Child Tax Credits but not Working Tax Credits and their gross annual income is less than £16,105 or
- Receive both Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits and have a gross annual income of up to £7,330.

However, families who qualify for free school meals under the criteria of being in receipt of Child Tax Credit (and not in receipt of Working Tax Credit) would lose entitlement if they had to move onto Universal Credit and their net earnings are more than £610 per month (£7,320 per year).

3.3 The number of children affected by this change is challenging to predict and ever-changing. However, we do consider the numbers to be relatively low.

3.4 From our Council Tax Reduction records we have identified 157 children who are currently entitled to free school meals where there is currently Child Tax Credit in payment and annual gross income is over £7,330 and less than £16,105. We estimate that 34 of these children are in Primary 1 to 3 therefore entitled to free school meals by this virtue. For the remaining 123 children they would potentially lose eligibility to free school meals if or when they transition to Universal Credit, if income levels remain consistent.

3.5 There are a wide range of factors which will influence the cost to the Council should it choose to use its discretion and extend provision of free school meals to families in receipt of Universal Credit with gross annual income less than £16,105 (and not otherwise entitled to free school meals). Factors include transition rates from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, uptake rates for free school meals and economic factors.

3.6 Working on the assumption that a maximum of 150 additional children receive free school meals each day from 26 October 2020 to 26 March 2021 then the estimated cost to the Council would be £27k. The estimated cost for Term 4 from 12 April 2021 is a further £16k.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The cost of extending free school meal entitlement as set out during 2020/21 is estimated to be £27k. The estimated cost for Term 4 from 12 April 2021 is a further £16k.

4.2 The estimated cost for provision of this entitlement for an academic year is £60k.

4.3 Funding to provide meals to 26 March 2021 can met from existing allocated budget. Allocations for 2021/22 will be subject to the budget setting process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No new implications arising from this report.

6.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A		
Compliance	N/A		
Operational	There is a risk that families experience food poverty.	L	We will continue to be active partners in the city food poverty alliance aiming to reduce food insecurity.
Financial	There is a risk that we have under calculated the uptake of additional free school meals.	L	Financial estimate based on an estimated maximum number and monitoring of uptake rates.
Reputational	N/A		
Environment / Climate	N/A		

7.   OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	N/A
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Extending free school meal entitlement will contribute to improve health and development of children.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 13 – No one in Aberdeen will go without food due to poverty by 2026.

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	The extension of free school meals has the potential to impact positively in a range of protected groups and there would be no negative impact on equalities and human rights.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Rent Management and Universal Credit Review report to Operational Delivery Committee on 5 March 2020

10. **APPENDICES**

Not applicable.

11. **REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Statutory Consultation Report: Proposed changes to school zones for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/127
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1, 1.1.2

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To report to Committee on the outcomes of a statutory consultation, on the proposal to adjust the school zone boundaries for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy, in order to accommodate the new Grandhome housing development.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   That the Committee agrees to implement the proposal to rezone an area of ground to the west of Whitestripes Avenue in Aberdeen, from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy, with effect from 5 January 2021.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   At its meeting of 16 January 2020, the Education Operational Delivery Committee instructed the Chief Officer, Integrated Children's and Family Services to undertake a statutory public consultation on proposals to make changes to the Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy school catchment zones, so that the new housing development at Grandhome is included entirely within the Oldmachar Academy catchment zone with effect from 1 August 2020, and to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of this consultation at its meeting in May 2020.

3.2   A public consultation on the above proposal was undertaken from 27 January 2020 to 15 March 2020. When carrying out the consultation, all requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended were met in full.

3.3   A full summary of the responses received during the consultation, along with officers' responses to the issues raised, are contained within the Consultation Report at Appendix 1. This also contains a copy of Education Scotland's report on the proposal.

3.4 With relation to Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, and having considered all of the information received during the consultation process, officers are satisfied that no comments have been received which would have caused them to review the merits of the proposal to make changes to the school zones for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy.

3.5 As a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the scheduled meeting of the Education Operational Delivery Committee in May 2020 was cancelled, and therefore the committee was not able to consider the proposals and the consultation report, in line with the original timescales as intended.

3.6 It is therefore recommended that the proposed changes to the school zones for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy are implemented with effect from 5 January 2021. Given that the changes will not affect any existing pupils or families, this change in implementation date is not expected to have any negative impact.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The public consultation has complied with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. As the proposal does not refer to the proposed closure of any school, any decision to implement it by this Committee cannot be called in by Scottish Ministers.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified		
Compliance	Risk that the Council is seen to make significant changes to schools without considering the views of stakeholders	L	All aspects of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 have been complied with.
Operational	Risk of negative impact on pupils if the recommendations are not implemented and pupils do not have access to safe	H	Implementing the recommendations will ensure that all pupils in the Grandhome development have a safe walking route to school

	walking routes to school		
Financial	No significant risks identified		
Reputational	Risk of damage to Council reputation if the recommendations are not implemented and pupils do not have access to safe walking routes to school	M	Implementing the recommendations will ensure that all pupils in the Grandhome development have a safe walking route to school
Environment / Climate	Risk of negative impact on the environment if the recommendations are not implemented and pupils do not have access to safe walking routes to school		Implementing the recommendations will ensure that all pupils in the Grandhome development have a safe walking route to school, therefore helping to reduce reliance on vehicles for travelling to school

7.   OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposal within this report supports the delivery of Place Policy Statement 3 – *Refresh the local transport strategy, ensuring it includes the results of a city centre parking review; promotes cycle and pedestrian routes; and considers support for public transport.* The proposed changes to the school zones will ensure that all pupils in the Grandhome development have a safe walking route to school, therefore helping to reduce reliance on vehicles for travelling to school.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 14 (reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions) and Stretch Outcome 15 (increasing the numbers of people walking or cycling as main mode of travel). The proposed changes to the school zones will ensure that all pupils in the Grandhome development have a safe walking route to school, therefore helping to reduce reliance on vehicles for travelling to school.

UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The report sets out the outcomes of a public consultation on the proposed changes to school zones, which fulfils the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	A full EHRIA has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

Education Operational Delivery Committee, 16 January 2020: *Proposed Consultation on changes to school zoning for Grandhome* – RES/20/003

10.   APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Consultation Report : Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy Rezoning

11.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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CONSULTATION REPORT
Buksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy Rezoning

This Consultation Report has been compiled in response to a public consultation carried out from January to March 2020, on proposals to rezone an area of the planned new Grandhome housing development, from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy. The document summarises the feedback received on the proposals set out below and Aberdeen City Council's response to the verbal and written comments submitted by interested parties, in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Proposal:

To rezone an area of ground to the west of Whitestripes Avenue in Aberdeen, from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy, with effect from 1 August 2020

Maps illustrating the proposed changes to the above school zone boundaries are included at Annex A of this report.

1. METHODOLOGY

This consultation was conducted in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. All requirements of the legislation have been met.

2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 Public Event

A public consultation event was held on 26 February 2020 to discuss the proposals. The event took place at Oldmachar Academy commencing at 7.00pm. The event was attended by 19 members of the public, all of whom were parents of pupils at Oldmachar Academy, or at primary schools within the Oldmachar Associated Schools Group.

2.2 Comments Received

There were 72 responses to the consultation submitted via the Council's online consultation portal. Four written comments were also received via email, including a response from Oldmachar Academy's Parent Council.

Overall, 42 respondents indicated that they were not in support of the proposal, (although two of these appear to have mistakenly thought that the proposal was to rezone the whole of the Grandhome development to Bucksburn Academy, rather than to Oldmachar Academy), whilst 30 respondents indicated that they were in support of the proposals.

All of the submissions, anonymised as necessary, are available to view on the Council's website: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations

2.3 Issues Raised

The main issues raised at the public meeting and in the written responses to the consultation, are summarised below.

Respondents who indicated that they did not agree with the proposal, raised the following points:

- Two of the email respondents expressed concern at the possibility of pupils living within the Grandhome development being required to attend Bucksburn Academy, due mainly to the travel distance involved. It appeared that these respondents had understood that the proposal was to rezone the whole of the Grandhome development to Bucksburn Academy. The respondents were contacted to explain that the proposal was in fact for the area to be rezoned to Oldmachar Academy.

- The most common concern about the proposals, which was raised by more than 30 respondents to the consultation and during the public meeting, was in relation to a perception that Oldmachar Academy does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate additional pupils from Grandhome, should the proposed changes to the school zones be approved. Some of the respondents felt that there would be a negative impact on pupils' learning, if the school was to exceed its capacity as a result of the changes.

- A small number of online respondents questioned why the new housing at Grandhome had been approved by the Council, without having put a plan in place for providing the required school capacity to accommodate the development.

- Some other respondents also commented that there appeared to be no long term plan for secondary education in Bridge of Don and Danestone, and that whilst a new school may ultimately be built at Grandhome, the existing school buildings might not be improved.

- At the public meeting and in some of the online responses, it was suggested by respondents that the school roll forecasts used by the Council to plan the estate are not accurate, and that the proposed changes could result in the school exceeding capacity.

- Over 20 respondents also expressed a concern about possible insufficient numbers of teaching staff available to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers, and that this would mean the school would be unable to offer a broad range of subject choices for pupils. Others suggested that this could also lead to larger class sizes.

- Approximately 16 online respondents highlighted issues relating to the condition and suitability of the Oldmachar Academy building, and suggested that this might prevent the school from safely accommodating any additional pupils from the Grandhome development. This concern was also raised at the public meeting. Some respondents suggested that the school does not have adequate social spaces for pupils, and others felt that there had been a general lack of investment in the building.

- Several respondents to the online consultation and at the public meeting highlighted concerns about possible increased traffic levels as a result of the proposed changes, and about road safety for pupils arriving at and leaving the school site.

Respondents who indicated that they were in support of the proposal, gave the following reasons for this:

- Fifteen respondents noted that they could see logic in zoning the whole of the Grandhome development to Oldmachar Academy, as this would provide a safer and shorter walking route to school for all pupils living in this area.

- Seven respondents also noted that they could see benefits in all pupils from the Grandhome development attending the same school, in that this would help to promote community cohesion.

- Six respondents noted that Bucksburn Academy is close to full capacity, and felt that the rezoning proposal would help to address this.

2.4 Education Scotland Report

An essential element of the statutory consultation process is the involvement of Education Scotland, whose report is provided as Annex B of this Consultation Report.

In its report, Education Scotland noted that the proposal to rezone the area of the Grandhome development from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy has some educational benefit, as it reduces medium term pressures in capacity at Bucksburn Academy, and provides shorter walking and cycling routes to school for the pupils living in the affected area.

The Education Scotland report highlighted the main issues raised by stakeholders during the consultation, including concerns regarding available pupil capacity at Oldmachar Academy, possible difficulties in recruiting teachers, and potential increases in traffic in the vicinity of Oldmachar Academy.

The report stated that there is a need for the Council to continue engaging with parents and other stakeholders on its plans for ensuring equitable education provision for all young people across the north of Aberdeen, and suggested that it would be helpful for the Council to review the current car drop-off and traffic flow arrangements around Oldmachar Academy.

3. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD AND CONTAINED WITHIN THE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

3.1 Capacity concerns at Oldmachar Academy, and long term planning for Grandhome and the Bridge of Don

As the Grandhome development continues to grow over the coming years, it is anticipated that there will be a need for new secondary school capacity to serve this new community, and provision for this has been included within the masterplan for the development. When planning consent for the development was granted, it was stipulated that a financial contribution would be required from the developer, to be used in providing new school capacity to serve the development.

Prior to any new secondary school being constructed, however, it is important that adequate education provision is made available for the initial numbers of young people who will be living in the new community, by using available capacity within the existing school estate. This is why the eastern section of the Grandhome development is currently already included within the Oldmachar Academy catchment zone, and why it is proposed to also include the western section of the development within the Oldmachar Academy zone.

Oldmachar Academy has a total pupil capacity of 1104, and the pupil roll at the school during 2019/20 was 716, leaving an available capacity of 388 pupil places. The Council's current school roll forecast for Oldmachar Academy, which indicates the likely pupil roll at the school in each of the next seven years, and takes into account all of the new houses planned for the Grandhome development which currently fall within the Oldmachar Academy zone, indicates that the pupil roll is likely to increase gradually year on year until at least 2026, when the roll is expected to reach approximately 1044. This would leave an available capacity in 2026 of approximately 60 pupil places.

Whilst there is a small number of existing houses within the area affected by this proposal, it is understood that there are currently no young people living within these houses who attend the affected schools, and so rezoning these houses from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy is not expected to alter pupil numbers at

either of the schools. Had there been any young people living in these houses currently attending Bucksburn Academy, then they would be entitled to remain at that school, after the rezoning to Oldmachar Academy took effect, and any younger siblings of these pupils would also be entitled to attend Bucksburn Academy after reaching secondary school age, in order to keep family groups together.

The developer for Grandhome has confirmed that the area of the Grandhome development which is affected by the proposal, and which would be rezoned to Oldmachar Academy, is not due to be developed until after 2026. This means that there would be no new houses completed or occupied within the rezoned area before this date, and therefore the pupil roll at Oldmachar Academy would be unaffected by new house building in the rezoned area for at least the next seven years, should the rezoning go ahead.

The developer has also indicated that the build rate for the affected area of the development after 2026 is expected to be approximately 175 houses per year. Based on current figures used to calculate the number of pupils per household within the Oldmachar Academy catchment zone, this would generate approximately 18 additional pupils at the school, in each year after the new houses begin to be occupied, if the area was to be rezoned to Oldmachar Academy.

In summary, the above figures show that the proposed rezoning will not have any impact on the available capacity at Oldmachar Academy until at least 2026, and whilst it is not currently possible to accurately predict pupil numbers beyond that time, based on current forecasts and the planned build rate of houses in the affected area, the school is unlikely to reach or exceed its available capacity until at least 2029/2030. It is anticipated that well before reaching this point, additional school provision for all pupils living with the Grandhome development at that time would be in place, or at least detailed plans for this would be known, which would help to ensure that the pupil roll at Oldmachar Academy remains within its available capacity in the longer term.

Officers are therefore confident that the proposed rezoning will not lead to Oldmachar Academy exceeding its pupil capacity. However they will continue to regularly monitor the actual and forecast pupil numbers at the school, and will take appropriate action as required, should there be any risk of the pupil roll exceeding available capacity. The Council will also continue to engage with parents and stakeholders of all schools in this area of the city, to consult on longer term plans for ensuring sufficient and appropriate levels of education provision are maintained.

3.2 Accuracy of the school roll forecasts

It is acknowledged that it is not possible to provide entirely accurate predictions of pupil numbers in future years, particularly when attempting to predict numbers several years into the future, due to the wide range of factors which can influence these figures. However, officers are confident that the methodology used to calculate school roll forecasts is sufficiently robust, to give a clear indication of trends and likely changes in pupil numbers over time, and to highlight potential problems with schools reaching or exceeding available capacity. Forecasts are monitored regularly and where they indicate possible shortfalls in capacity in the short to medium term, mitigating actions are put in place to address these.

3.3 Staffing shortages

The Council continues to face challenges with teacher recruitment in many parts of the city; however the situation is improving. Vacancy numbers have reduced by approximately half in the last two years. Given the anticipated impacts on the pupil roll

at Oldmachar Academy as a result of this proposal, as detailed above, officers do not consider that the proposal would lead to any significant difficulties with teacher recruitment at the school.

3.4 Condition and Suitability of the Oldmachar Academy building
The condition of the Oldmachar Academy building is currently graded as 'B' (Satisfactory). However the suitability of the building is graded as 'C' (Poor). Officers were due to undertake an updated suitability survey for the building earlier this year, in order to identify specific required improvements so that these could be considered for an allocation of funding within the Council's Condition and Suitability programme; however this survey was delayed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. It is hoped that it will be possible to safely undertake the survey later this year, and subject to the allocation of sufficient funding, any necessary improvements to the suitability of the building will be undertaken in due course.

Due to the timescales and relatively small forecasted increase in pupils numbers resulting from this proposal as described above, it is not anticipated that the proposal would have any negative impact on the suitability of the building.

3.5 Increased traffic levels at Oldmachar Academy
Due to the timescales and the relatively small forecasted increase in pupils numbers resulting from this proposal as described above, it is not anticipated that the proposal would lead to any significant impact on traffic levels in the vicinity of Oldmachar Academy. However, officers will continue to monitor car use and traffic flow around the school, and will liaise with the school management team regarding any required mitigating action, should there be an increased concern for the safety of pupils when arriving at or leaving the school grounds.

4.   COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSALS

Following the conclusion of the consultation period, Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, requires the Council to review the relevant proposal, having had regard to any written representations that have been received by it during the consultation period, any oral representations made to it at the public meeting held on 26 February, and Education Scotland's report.

In terms of Section 10(2) (e) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report is required to contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with its duty under the above Section 9(1) of the Act.

With relation to Section 9(1) of the 2010 Act and having considered all of the information received during the consultation process, officers are satisfied that no comments have been received which would have caused them to review the merits of the proposal to make changes to the school zones for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy.

When submitting the original proposal for this change, it was anticipated that elected members would be in a position to make a decision on the proposal before August 2020, and it was therefore anticipated that if approved, the changes to the school zones would take effect from 1 August 2020. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the scheduled meeting of the Education Operational Delivery Committee in May 2020

was cancelled, and therefore the committee was not able to consider the proposals prior to the suggested implementation date.

It is therefore proposed that, if approved by the Committee, the changes to the school zones are instead implemented from 5 January 2021. Given that the changes will not affect any existing pupils or families, this change in implementation date is not expected to create any difficulties.

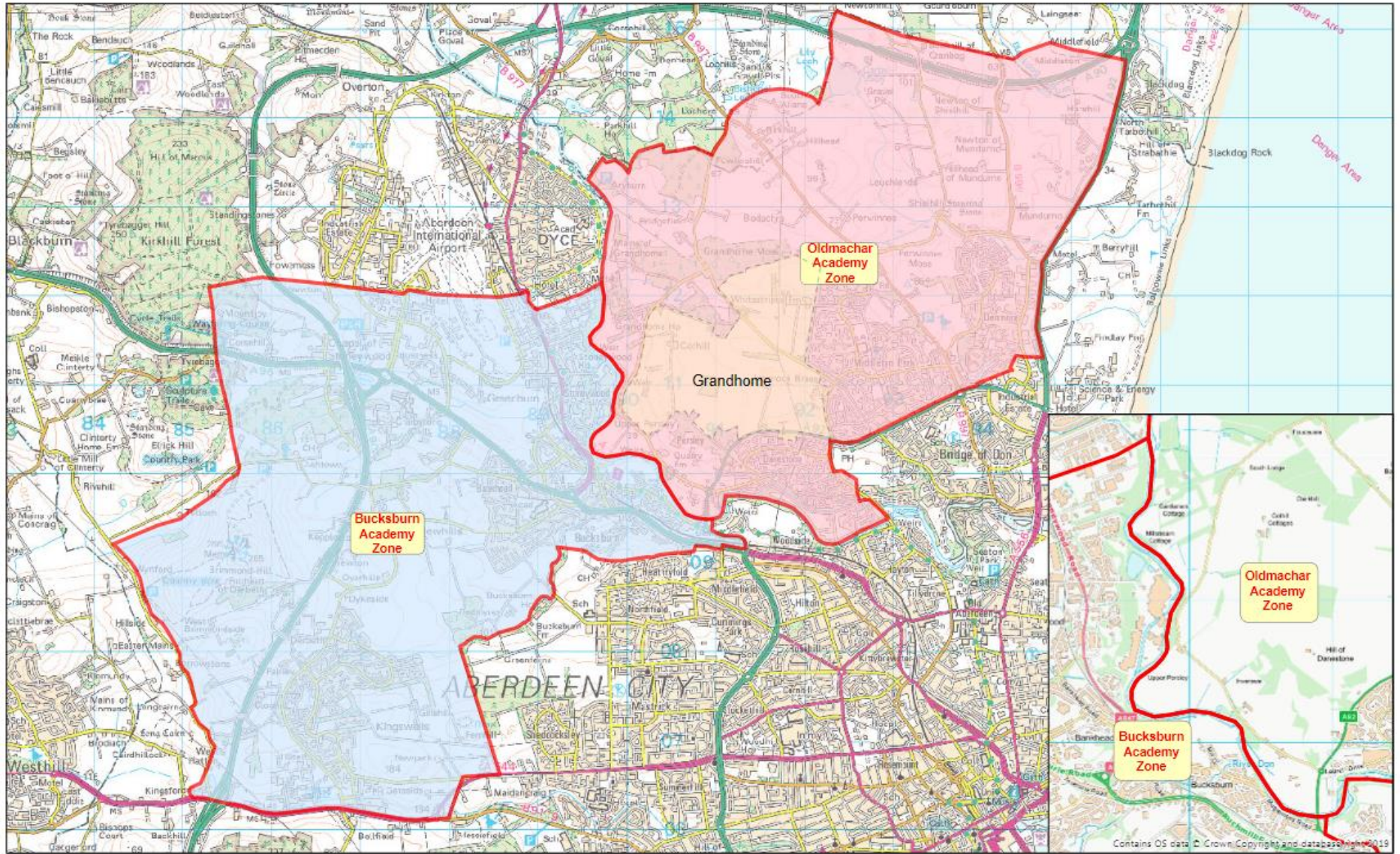## 5.   RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Operational Delivery Committee agrees to implement the proposal to rezone an area of ground to the west of Whitestripes Avenue in Aberdeen, from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy, with effect from 5 January 2021.

Steve Whyte
Director of Resources
September 2020

Buncksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy zones (existing)
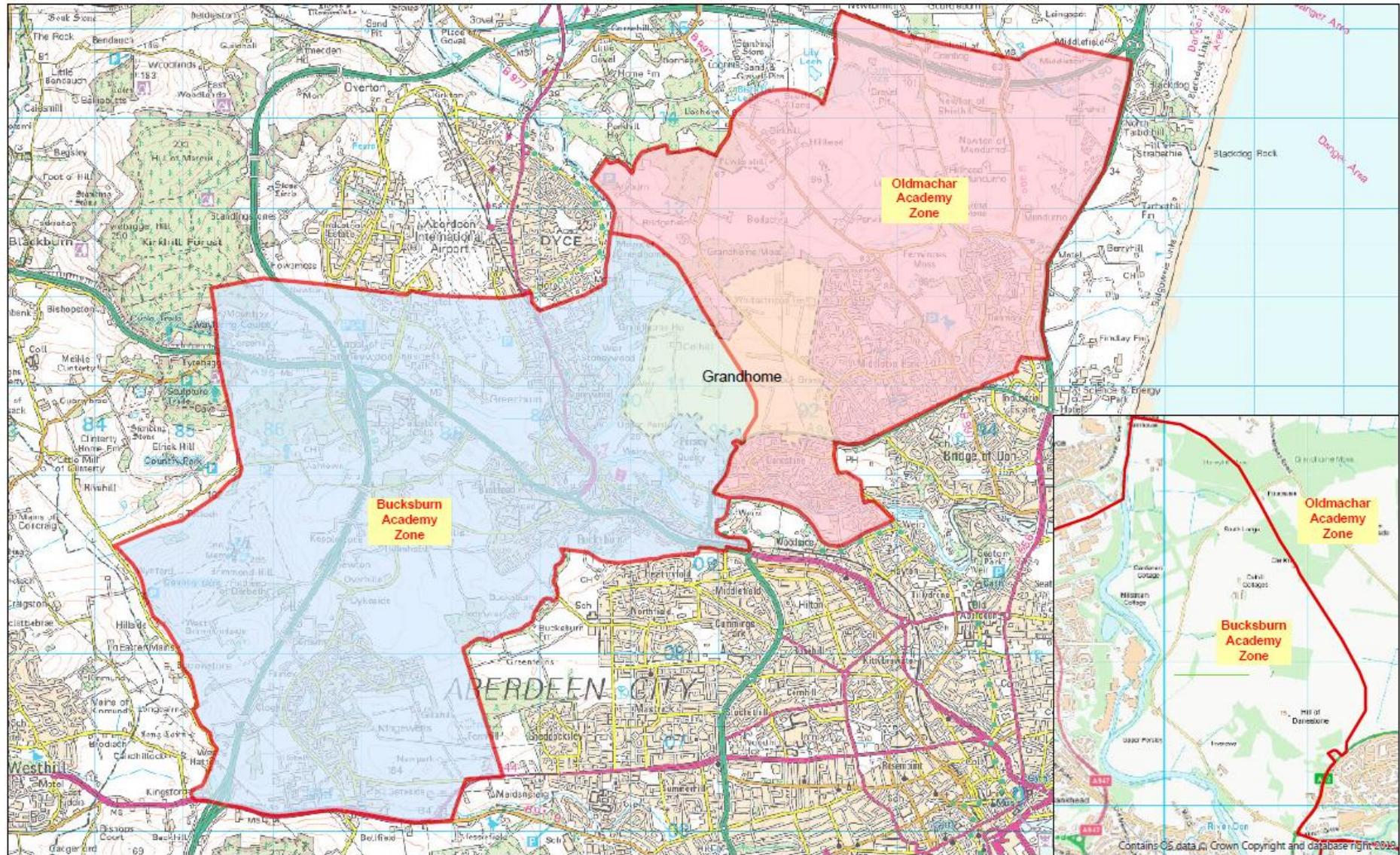
Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy zones (proposed)

Oldmachar Academy Zone

Bucksburn Academy Zone

Grandhome

ABERDEEN CITY

Oldmachar Academy Zone

Bucksburn Academy Zone

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REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to rezone an area from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy.

March 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Aberdeen City Council's proposal to rezone an area from Bucksburn Academy to Oldmachar Academy. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

* the likely effects of the proposal for young people of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other young people in the area;

* any other likely effects of the proposal;

* how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and

* the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

* attendance at the public meeting held on 26 February 2020 in connection with the council's proposals; and

* consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Aberdeen City Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The statutory consultation period ran from 27 January to 15 March 2020. A public meeting was held on the 26 February 2020 in Oldmachar Academy. The consultation document was available to stakeholders including Parent Councils, parents and young people of both schools, and elected representatives for the area. Copies of the consultation document were available at the schools affected by the proposal, local libraries, the council's headquarters and on the council website.

2.3 The public meeting was attended by 19 members of the public. The council received 72 responses through an online survey and four email responses. Of the 72 responses to the online survey, 30 were in favour of the proposal and 42 against. The main areas of concern raised were about the capacity of both schools to cope with additional numbers both in regard to specific proposal and wider planned and potential housing developments. Overall, respondents who commented in relation to Bucksburn Academy were in favour of the proposal. Respondents who commented in relation to Oldmachar Academy were concerned about the potential negative impact on school accommodation and resources in relation to issues such as social space and teacher recruitment. A minority of respondents commented on the need for wider education estate planning for the whole of the Bridge of Don area. A few stakeholders raised concerns about the potential increase in traffic around Oldmachar Academy.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines how the proposal to change the catchment areas will have some educational benefits. It outlines that the proposal will establish safer walking routes to school for young people in the area affected. The council believes that both schools will have viable pupil rolls under the proposal and that this will enable teacher staffing levels to be maintained. In turn this will enable the provision of an appropriate curriculum for young people. There is potential educational benefit to this proposal as it would contribute to reducing the projected medium term increase in the school roll at Bucksburn Academy. It also provides shorter routes to school for the young people who will live in the area under consideration.

3.2 A minority of stakeholders who responded agree with the proposal to change catchment boundaries. The main reason being that the proposal would reduce future increases in the roll of Bucksburn Academy. In both schools, parents and other stakeholders are concerned about the capacity of their school to cope with additional numbers. There are a number of housing developments underway or planned in both the current catchment areas. Almost all respondents, whether in favour of the proposal or against, raised concerns about increasing school rolls across the wider area. There is a need for the council to continue to engage parents and other stakeholders on how they plan to ensure equitable provision for all young people, whilst meeting the demands the projected increase in school rolls will place on the educational estate across north Aberdeen.

3.3 Most of those who commented about routes to school acknowledge that the proposal will be beneficial for pupils who would live in the area under consideration. HM Inspectors are of the view zoning the area under consideration to Oldmachar Academy will allow for shorter walking and cycling routes to school for pupils. A few respondents are concerned about the increase in traffic the proposal could generate around Oldmachar Academy. Should the proposal go ahead it would be helpful for the council to review car drop-off and traffic flow arrangements around the school.

3.4 Almost all of those respondents who commented specifically about Oldmachar Academy, including the school's Parent Council, are concerned about how well the school will accommodate any increase in the school roll. Stakeholders are worried about the

pressure this will put on the accommodation, particularly social spaces. Other concerns relate to the recruitment of any additional teachers that may be required.

3.5 Although there are currently no young people living in the small number of existing houses in the area whom this would affect and it is not stated in the proposal, the council has confirmed that it would support younger siblings of young people attending Bucksburn Academy at the time changes are implemented. They will be entitled to attend Bucksburn Academy, in order to keep family groups together.

4. Summary

Overall, the proposal has some educational benefit. It reduces the medium term pressures in capacity at Bucksburn Academy. In addition, it provides shorter walking and cycling routes to school. The council acknowledges the need to continue to engage stakeholders in its planning for school provision across the catchments areas of both schools as planned and future housing developments progress.

HM Inspectors
April 2020

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Revised Scheme of Devolved School Management
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/20/112
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Caroline Johnstone
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.2, 1.1.5

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To inform Committee and seek approval for the Aberdeen City Revised Devolved School Management Scheme, which is fully based on the national Devolved School Management guidance issued by the Scottish Government in summer 2019.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Committee approves the Revised Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme 2020 (Appendix 1).

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1. **Devolved School Management (DSM) – National Context**

3.1.1 The Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme, first implemented by Grampian Regional Council in 1993, was adopted by Aberdeen City Council at reorganisation in 1996. The Scottish Government published formal guidelines on DSM in 2006 and made a further revision to those guidelines in 2012.

3.1.2 In 2016/17 the Scottish Government progressed a Governance Review which included consultation on the empowerment of schools and on fair funding to schools.

3.1.3 As a result of the extended review and consultation process, a Joint Agreement between the Scottish Government and local government was announced which details the shared commitment to close the attainment gap and raise attainment for all. The Joint Agreement led to the development of a Head Teacher's Charter. The Head Teachers Charter advises that in an empowered system, head teachers should lead learning communities to determine the most appropriate means of closing the poverty attainment gap and take decisions on the best use of resource.

3.1.4   In order to support the head teacher charter, the Scottish Government has developed refreshed national DSM guidance in collaboration with COSLA. The updated guidance clarifies national expectations and all Local Authorities are required to review their local DSM schemes in keeping with the updated guidance with a view to publishing new schemes over this academic year.

3.1.5   The Aberdeen City Revised Devolved School Management Scheme adheres to the national guidance and sets out how the local scheme will operate.

3.2   **Updated DSM Guidance**

3.2.1   The updated DSM guidance (published summer 2019) seeks to build and improve on the DSM guidelines of 2012. The guidelines can be found here https://www.gov.scot.policies/schools/devolved-school-management/

3.2.2   The guidance clarifies what is expected and recommended in a local scheme and provided practical examples from Local Authorities. A framework has been provided to allow Local Authorities to populate a standard format which will introduce a level of consistency in how schemes are presented and support benchmarking.

3.2.3   Key principles underpinning Devolved School Management are identified in the guidance as:

- Subsidiarity and Empowerment
- Collaboration
- Accountability and Responsibility
- Clarity and Equity

3.2.4   The guidance clearly states that DSM schemes must support the Fair Funding Principles and;

- Support excellence and equity - ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed
- Be fair - placing the needs of all children and young people at the centre
- Be simple, transparent and predictable - ensuring the costs of delivering education can be easily understood and explained and that schools are able to manage and plan ahead with certainty
- Deliver value for money - ensuring that every penny spent is used effectively

3.2.5   Recognising that collaboration is key to a successful DSM scheme, the Quality Improvement Manager (Closing the Gap) has led the development of the new scheme with colleagues from across the system including head teachers and colleagues from finance. This approach helped ensure that Aberdeen City Council develops a scheme which enables schools to meet the needs of children and young people effectively. Officers also linked with colleagues from Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils to share approaches and learn from each other as schemes were developed.

3.2.6 The Aberdeen City DSM group agreed key principles for school staffing allocations which were shared and agreed by Head Teachers across the city. These are:

- Every school requires a Head Teacher who does not have a teaching commitment
- Every school should have a base allocation of staff which enables them to meet the core teaching and reduced class contact time requirements of the school
- National and local agreements (SNCT and LNCT) around class sizes and teachers' terms and conditions must be observed
- Every school requires an allocation of dedicated Additional Support for Learning teaching time to enable them to meet the needs of their pupils

3.2.7 The Chief Education Officer used delegated powers to implement the revised Draft Devolved School Management Scheme from July 2020 to support school budget planning and ensure that this adhered to the budget set by Council in February.

3.3 **Basic Principles**

3.3.1 Aberdeen City Council is committed to providing a high-quality education to all pupils attending local authority schools in Aberdeen City. The Council holds the view that within the policy parameters set by Aberdeen City Council, decisions about the management of schools will, wherever possible, be taken at school level.

3.3.2 Devolved School Management provides an opportunity for individual schools to target resources more precisely in seeking to achieve agreed objectives within the overall context of Aberdeen City Council's Best Value strategy. Devolved budgets provide the core funds which schools will use to address current and relevant national and local priorities as set out in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000) and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004).

3.3.3 It is recognised that if a scheme of Devolved Management is to continue to provide the basis for the successful operation of schools then it will have to change and adapt to changing circumstances and to new information.

3.3.4 This scheme of Devolved Management will, therefore, be reviewed regularly, not less than once every 3 years, and amended in the light of experience and changing circumstances. This review to be undertaken by a group representative of all stakeholders.

3.3.5 Devolved School Management will be applied in a manner which meets the needs and suits the circumstances of the Aberdeen City community and will be firmly based upon the aims for Children and Family Services promoted by Aberdeen City Council.

3.3.6 It is recognised that increasingly, the key decisions for the promotion and enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching are taken at school level.

In recognition of this, Aberdeen City Council will endeavour to maximise the devolution of funding to schools.

3.3.7 The responsibility for securing the adequate and efficient provision of education and for raising standards in the quality of education within Aberdeen City lies with the Local Authority. Head Teachers are directly accountable to the Authority in the task of managing their schools and should exercise their devolved management responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Authority's responsibilities. The monitoring of Devolved School Management will be a central element of the quality improvement mechanisms employed by the Education Improvement Team.

3.3.8 In relation to the above, the major roles for the central Education Improvement Team will be strategic planning, resource management, quality improvement and co-ordination of support.

3.3.9 Within the scheme of devolution, schools must adhere to national and local agreements in such areas as class sizes, staff structures, length of school day, etc.

3.3.10 The integrity of financial recording by each establishment is central to DSM and is liable to interrogation by Internal Audit.

3.4 Staffing Formulae

3.4.1 The most significant element of schools' devolved budget is the staffing budget. A review of the schools' staffing formulae in light of the Scottish Government requirement to review the DSM scheme seemed prudent for a number of reasons including:

- Existing staffing allocations lacked clarity and transparency
- Some historical arrangements were no longer relevant or appropriate
- The presumption of mainstreaming requires all schools to be able to support a wide range of additional needs within their pupil group
- An identified lack of resource in some settings

3.5 Consultation

3.5.1 The review of the Aberdeen City Council Devolved School Management Scheme was undertaken in light of refreshed Scottish Government Guidance. A range of informal engagement and consultation took place during the development stage. Formal consultation on a proposed new scheme took place between 14th and 29th May 2020. Responses were invited from staff and from parents/carers and pupils.

3.5.2 254 survey responses were returned by staff.

3.5.3 In addition, emailed responses to the consultation were received from 3 secondary schools, the Aberdeen Secondary Head Teacher Association and 2 teaching trade unions.

3.5.4   Just under 47% of responses were from teaching staff although Pupil Support Assistants were well represented (just under 25%) and Early Years Practitioners accounted for just under 22% of responses.

3.5.5   526 responses were received from parents/carers and pupils. 97% of responses were from parents and carers, with the remaining responses from pupils. It is acknowledged that the subject matter does not easily translate for pupils and a limited number of responses is not surprising. This will be taken account of when planning future consultation around DSM.

3.5.6   Emailed responses were received from 2 Parent Councils.

3.5.7   A full summary of the consultation responses is available at Appendix 2.

3.6   Summary analysis – Staff feedback

3.6.1   Further scrutiny of the data shows that schools likely to benefit from the revised staffing formulae were more likely to respond favourably to the questions posed, which is unsurprising.   7 respondents noted that, although they disagreed with the new allocations, the formula was clear and transparent.

3.6.2   The Secondary HT association noted that, "There has been a need to review staffing allocations for many years and this has been under discussion for some time within Aberdeen City Council. The new formula avoids the historical ambiguities present in the previous formula."

3.6.3   34 responses expressed concern about the impact of the proposals on Principal Teacher posts, capacity to deliver a wide range of subjects and impact on smaller schools 17 responses expressed a view that the proposals were discriminatory towards small secondary schools.

3.6.4   17 responses noted that, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the timing of the consultation was unwelcome. It is accepted that the timing was unfortunate, although the need to work to the budget set by Council in February necessitated the introduction of a revised scheme.

3.6.5   26 responses expressed a view that the proposals would impact negatively on supporting learners in terms both of meeting needs and raising attainment. 15 responses referred to reduced Pupil Support Assistant hours in their school and a negative impact on equity, 11 responses expressed a view that the proposals discriminated against lower Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) profile schools while 2 viewed them as discriminatory towards higher SIMD profile schools. 2 respondents noted the proposals shared resources more equitably.

3.6.6   6 respondents described the draft scheme as clear and concise, 10 felt the scheme lacked clarity.

3.6.7   14 responses questioned the proposed inclusion of energy costs and Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) exam costs in the devolved budget, questioning the ability of schools and Head Teachers to control the former and expressing

concern that including the latter in the devolved budget may lead to a reduction in opportunity and choice for young people.

3.6.8 31 responses were critical of perceived budget cuts and criticised the timing of this in view of the current pandemic.

3.6.9 Analysis of returns from staff in schools who will see little change from the new scheme are broadly positive or neutral. Responses from schools which have historically had higher levels of resources than are proposed within the draft scheme were generally less positive.

3.7 Summary analysis – Parent, Carer and Pupil feedback

3.7.1 From the additional comments provided, there appears to be some correlation of negative views with some of the school staff returns. This is unsurprising and may reflect comments from schools who are likely to see some budget reduction from a new scheme. 9 respondents referred specifically to removal of management posts or to managers teaching.

3.7.2 35 parent/carer responses expressed concern about the impact of the proposals on equity of provision, while 5 respondents felt the proposals were more equitable.

3.7.3 Additional commentary from parents and pupils evidences a strong need to focus on allocations of support for learning to all schools to ensure the needs of those learners with additional support needs can be met. This features in around 30 responses

3.7.4 7 responses echoed the staff view that the timing of the consultation was not ideal. As noted previously this is accepted; but was unavoidable for the reasons stated.

3.7.5 15 responses expressed the view that DSM will add to Head Teachers' workload and a similar number made reference to a need for training and support to schools in dealing with DSM. It is possible that some of those responding are unaware of Head Teachers' current obligations in respect of DSM.

3.7.6 Including energy and exam costs in the devolved budget was raised as a concern by 11 respondents and mirrors the feedback from staff in this area.

3.7.7 399 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft scheme is clear and easy to understand, however a total of 31 responses refer to lack of clarity and transparency, use of jargon and a need for prior understanding to be able to make comparisons or comment. It is acknowledged that this is not an easy subject to make accessible to those without prior knowledge of it and this will be considered in any future consultation around DSM.

3.7.8 While 5 respondents welcomed the involvement of parents in making decisions around use of funds, a similar number felt that teachers and Head Teachers are best placed to make such decisions.

3.7.9 22 responses criticised perceived budget cuts, suggesting schools need more funding not less.

3.8 Conclusion and recommendations

3.8.1 Based on the feedback received it is recommended that the draft scheme should be adopted with the following considerations.

3.8.2 Energy costs should be removed from schools' devolved budget. Feedback supports the view that these costs are largely out with the control of the Head Teacher and that the ability to control energy costs varies from school to school, depending on the age and condition of the building.

3.8.3 SQA costs should be removed from the devolved budget. Feedback supports the view that including these could lead to reduced opportunities for young people to be presented for exams if financial concerns were a factor.

3.8.4 The DSM scheme should include staffing budgets, which will be devolved within the parameters set out in the draft scheme.

3.8.5 Alternative spend requests in respect of staffing underspend should be approved if they support improvements to the curriculum, learning and teaching, wellbeing or health and safety.

3.8.6 The DSM scheme is a cash-based scheme. Head Teachers working collegiately with their school communities have flexibility within this to create structures to suit their specific needs provided these are within budget and local and national agreements are observed.

3.8.7 Officers will work with Finance colleagues to ensure Head Teachers are provided with regular, accurate financial information and advice to enable them to monitor budgets effectively.

3.8.8 The vacant post of DSM Coordinator should be recruited to immediately to support and advise schools in their management of the revised scheme.

3.8.9 Consideration should be given to the timescale for implementation for any school likely to have to review their school structure to ensure that existing agreements for changing school structures can be adhered to.

3.8.10 In making any changes all local and national agreements (LNCT and SNCT) will be adhered to.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report deals with Children & Family Services budgets which have been approved previously. In respect of these there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

4.2 There are ongoing staffing and financial implications in the continued development and implementation of the DSM scheme in terms of the delivery of the professional learning offer and the professional support offer to head teachers and schools, as required in the new Scottish Government DSM guidelines (2019).

4.3 There requires to be ongoing officer capacity within the Children and Family Services Education Improvement Team to continue to develop and deliver on the systems and structures to underpin the devolved budgets agenda.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 8 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 requires an Education Authority to have a scheme for delegating to Headteachers management of all or part of the Authority's budget appropriated to the school in question. Approval of the scheme set out in Appendix 1 will meet this statutory duty and ensure compliance with The Scottish Government Devolved School Management Guidelines (June 2019)

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Budget Pressures in the context of the Council's financial situation	H	Monitor and ensure the service operates within agreed budgets, putting in place remedial action as required
Compliance	Failure to comply with a Scottish Government requirement	H	Review and implement a revised DSM scheme for Aberdeen City Council in accordance with published guidance
Operational	Budget Pressures impacting on capacity to deliver service	H	Monitor and ensure the service operates within agreed budgets, putting in place remedial action as required
Financial	General budget constraints	H	Monitor and ensure the service operates within agreed budgets, putting in place remedial action as required
Reputational	Failure to comply with a Scottish Government requirement. Budget Pressures impacting on capacity to deliver service.	H	Review and implement a revised DSM scheme for Aberdeen City Council in accordance with published guidance

			Monitor and ensure the service operates within agreed budgets, putting in place remedial action as required
Environment / Climate	n/a		

7. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement People - 7	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Policy Statement 7 – Commitment to closing the poverty related attainment gap in education while working with partners in the city. The paper seeks approval for the revised Devolved School Management scheme which will support schools to have full control of their budgets and enable them to target resources most appropriately and engage the support of relevant partners to meet the needs of their community and achieve the aims of the National Improvement Framework.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes 1 and 6. Continued judicious use of funding and appropriate targeting of additional resources will ensure that children and young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are fully accessing education and more likely to achieve their potential and contribute to the economy. Specific links: Stretch outcome 1 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors y 2026 Stretch outcome 6 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals in this report seek to ensure the best use of resource in the system, promoting an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that appropriate and timely personalised support is available to them.

	Effective use of all resources and allowing each school community full control of these resources will help to ensure all initiatives and interventions are selected and implemented based on the needs of each school community and planned effectively to impact positively on all children and young people and are particularly targeted at those who are adversely affected by poverty. Specific links to: Stretch Outcome 4 90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026 Stretch Outcome 6 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026, Stretch Outcome 7 Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Underpinning the work of all schools in Aberdeen City is reducing the poverty related attainment gap and achieving excellence and equity for all.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	This report considers the local authority's legal obligations in respect of the legislation below: **Devolved School Management Guidance 2019** • This guidance supports the development of devolved school management schemes, which set out how local authorities fund schools and the accountability and responsibility for financial decisions. **The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000** • Duty of education authority in providing school education • Raising standards • Duty to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. • Requirement that education be provided in mainstream schools

	The National Improvement Framework
	• Education Authorities are under a duty to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of education of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them and to carry out the duty with a view to achieving the strategic priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Scottish Government Devolved School Management Framework Document – for Local Authorities (June 2019)
- The Scottish Government Devolved School Management Guidelines (June 2019)

10. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Aberdeen City Council Revised Scheme of Devolved School Management 2020
- Appendix 2 - DSM Survey Summary Responses June 2020

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Aberdeen City Council
Devolved School Management Scheme

June 2020

Document Control

Approval Date	June 2020
Implementation Date	June 2020
Policy Number	
Policy Author(s) and Owner	Caroline Johnstone/Eleanor Sheppard
Approval Authority	Aberdeen City Council
Scheduled Review	March 2023
Changes	Review of existing DSM scheme dated 2012 to reflect new Scottish Government Guidance 2019

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

Like many cities across the world, Aberdeen has been significantly affected by the COVID19 pandemic. Aberdeen City Council has plans in place to support recovery and ensure that Aberdeen is once again a thriving, cosmopolitan port in the North-east of Scotland. The council continues to offer a wide range of information and services to residents and businesses and has published an Economic Recovery Plan in response to the pandemic. https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/

Our vision is of Aberdeen as **'a place where all people can prosper'.** The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) sets out a ten-year plan for how Community Planning Aberdeen will realise this vision by 2026 in Partnership with local people, places and communities. https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2019-04/Local%20Outcome%20Improvement%20Plan%202016-26.pdf

Within Aberdeen City Council the Children and Family Services function is part of the Operations Directorate. The Education service sits within this function and serves around 24,000 children and young people across the City through 58 schools and a range of support services. The Local Authority is the guarantor of quality in City schools and services.

We recognise and respect the influence that parents and carers have on their children's lives and learning and value working in partnership with parents through well-established Parent Councils and through the Citywide Parent Forum. Citywide Parent Forum representatives join local church representatives and Elected Members to form the Educational Operations Delivery Committee. The Committee approve the DSM scheme.
https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/school-life/parent-councils

Devolved School Management Overview
Devolved School Management (DSM) was first introduced in 1993 to enhance and improve the management of resources at school level. These updated DSM guidelines have been developed in collaboration with head teacher and finance colleagues to reflect the national Education Reform Programme and current local financial arrangements. The Aberdeen City DSM scheme is based fully on the national framework and recommended structure.https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/devolved-school-management/ Compliance with these guidelines is mandatory.

Working within an agreed national framework will help support national and local benchmarking, introduce an element of common understanding for users who may work in different Local Authorities and aid the provision of professional learning. In keeping with the national guidance, Aberdeen City Council intends to engage across local authority boundaries to quality assure and improve the local DSM system on a three-yearly basis.

Any changes in levels of finance available to schools will be reflected through a clearly communicated refresh of allocations following the Council budget setting meeting in February of each year. Yearly changes will be approved at the Education Operational Delivery Committee to ensure that the scheme transparently allocates available education resource. A formal and thorough evaluation and review will be undertaken on

a three-yearly basis.   This review will be undertaken by a group representative of all stakeholders and be approved through Committee.

Principles of Devolved School Management
The updated DSM principles, agreed by the Fair Funding Reference Group and building on and enhancing the foundations and principles of the 2012 guidance, are:
- Subsidiarity and Empowerment
- Collaboration
- Accountability and Responsibility
- Clarity and Equity

These principles reflect the National Improvement Framework aims of excellence through raising attainment and achieving equity. The principles also fully endorse those proposed in the Fair Funding consultation:
- **support excellence and equity** - ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed
- **be fair** - placing the needs of all children and young people at the centre
- **be simple**, transparent and predictable – ensuing the costs of delivering education can be easily understood and explained and that schools are able to manage and plan ahead with certainty
- **deliver value for money** – ensuring that every penny spent is used effectively

Ongoing review of this scheme will be based on these principles.

2. BUDGET OVERVIEW

The revised DSM Guidelines have been considered in relation to the financial pressures that the public sector is experiencing and will continue to experience over the years ahead. In Scottish Councils there are around 51,000 teachers employed with approximately £5.56bn spent on school education in 2018/19.

The breakdown of Aberdeen City Council's Education budget for 2020/21 is as follows:

Subservice	Budget (£'000s)	Sum Devolved to Headteacher (£'000s)	%
Pre-Primary	41,714	22,941	55.00
Primary	80,202	63,803	79.55
Secondary	68,406	55,275	80.80
Special	16,327	6,279	38.46
Total	**206,649**	**148,298**	**71.76**

Aberdeen City Council's Education budget for 2020/21 of £206.65m accounts for approximately 43% of the total expenditure budgets of all council services. £148.30m of the Education budget will be devolved to schools in 2020/21, representing around 72% of the total Education budget for 2020/21.

School budgets are primarily based on school roll with staffing budgets also influenced by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Agreed mechanisms are in place to enable flexible spending across allocated budgets where the headteacher and school community have agreed this is appropriate.

3. AREAS OF EXPENDITURE TO BE DEVOLVED

Whilst headteachers are given maximum flexibility over their budgets, there are areas of expenditure that are generally not considered suitable for devolution as they do not support head teachers to improve the quality of provision. The reasons for this may include, but are not limited to:

- areas outside the influence of a headteacher
- areas that are too bureaucratic
- areas that have unacceptable levels of risk
- areas which benefit from benefit from economies of scale
- areas which require professional expertise
- areas which are complex by their nature

Non devolved budgets
1. Budgets linked to building maintenance and running costs such as rent payments and capital expenditure, property insurance and non-domestic rates as well as Local Authority contracted work on managing the school estate including grounds maintenance, window cleaning, hygiene supplies, waste collection, janitorial and cleaning staff, consequential costs from burglary or vandalism and utility costs
2. Energy
3. Corporate support function costs for example Finance, HR, and Legal functions
4. Education support services including Educational Psychology, Quality Improvement Teams, ASN Support Services and Music Instructors
5. Grants and allowances such as school clothing grants, Education Maintenance Allowances, home to school pupil transport, school meals and Parent Council expenditure and premature retirement costs
6. SQA examinations
7. Local Authority Information Management Systems (currently SEEMIS)
8. Long-term supply cover for teaching staff sickness
9. Supply cover for teaching staff maternity leave
10. Supply cover other (Trade Union duties etc.)

Devolved budgets
- Staff costs – teaching and support
- Short term teaching supply cover, sickness absence and Family Leave costs
- Supplies and services costs including Alarm Units, telephone line rental and costs and medical costs
- School focused development (SFD)
- Per capita
- Travelling expenses

4. THE SCHEME IN DETAIL

4.1 Financial Regulations

Financial Regulations are an integral part of the stewardship of Council Funds. Adhering to the Financial Regulations ensures that all financial transactions of the Council are conducted in a manner which demonstrates openness, integrity and transparency. They form a significant part of the governance of the Council.

The ACC DSM Scheme will provide a transparent, fair and equitable allocation of resources to schools. Allocation formulae have been designed with relative stability in mind, providing a financial envelope in advance for Headteachers to effectively plan their spend for the forthcoming academic year. This will promote the efficient and effective operation of each school, and application of resources.

Local authorities must secure best value in accordance with section 1 of the Local Government Scotland Act 2003.http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/1/contents

The achievement of this will be outlined in Section 4.2.

Financial Regulations - Approved 2nd March 2020

Procurement Regulations - Approved 2nd March 2020

4.2 Best Value Principles

Headteachers will be subject to financial regulation 5.12.1 (Value for Money):

- Each Director and Chief Officer must ensure that their Services achieve best value from any purchase before making any commitment. The DSM scheme places this responsibility on head teachers.
- All purchasing and orders for supplies, services and works must be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Regulations.
- All purchases of computer and telecommunications equipment must be coordinated through the Chief Officer – Digital and Technology.

To order goods and services schools will have access to the council's purchase ordering system, PECOS. To manage their budgets, schools will have access to the council's financial system, e-financials.

In addition, schools are supported in the operation of their budgets by resources through the Accounting team. Each school will be assigned a member of the Accounting team as a Finance Contact. Schools will be obliged to hold telephone or Teams meetings with their assigned Finance Contact on a regular basis throughout the financial year.

4.3 Local Authority Commitment to Devolved School Management

In an empowered system, headteachers, schools and Local Authorities are partners, each contributing and supporting each other and respecting the different role each plays. This guidance was developed by a collaborative working group of head teachers and central colleagues to ensure the guidance works for all stakeholders.

Local Authorities have a responsibility to lead the review of the DSM scheme and to review associated systems to ensure that they enable key decisions to be made by

those who are closest to the educational experience of children and young people in order to maximise outcomes for children and young people.

Budget holders will be responsible for ensuring that the regulations referred to in this scheme are followed fully and that resource is used to directly improve outcomes for children.

How Good Is Our School 4? provides a national expectation of how head teachers will utilise resource to support improvement. School performance in the management of resources to promote equity will be evaluated based on the quality indicator and school leadership teams should be familiar with the expectations within the quality indicator. The QI has two themes:

- Management of finance for learning
- Management of resources and environment for learning

Level 5 illustration from HGIOS4:

'We have effective systems for financial stewardship and management to ensure best value and sustainability. We make innovative use of the finances available to allocate resources to take forward our improvement priorities and planned developments. Our available budget is used very effectively to meet the needs of all learners. Staff, pupils, parents, partners and other stakeholders understand their responsibilities for effective financial management. We are pro-active in seeking funding from a range of sources to support specific aspects of our work. We work together to ensure transparency and equity in the use of our financial resources. We take account of local and national advice in our financial management, seeking support from those with financial expertise as appropriate. Financial expenditure is carefully planned to improve the quality of learning and teaching and increase attainment and achievement for all learners. We systematically monitor and can evidence the extent to which our use of financial resources leads to improved outcomes for learners.

'We make the best use of available resources, including digital technologies, to create, sustain and enhance a motivating environment for effective learning. The learning environments across the school are seen as a resource to fully support learning, teaching and inclusion. We have a wide range of appropriate resources to support and challenge learners at all levels of their learning. We encourage our learners to make independent and responsible use of a range of resources.

We ensure sustainable, transparent and equitable allocation and use of resources to support the learning needs of all. We manage allocated resources proactively and efficiently to meet planned learning and development priorities. In consultation with relevant stakeholders, resources are sourced, allocated and used efficiently and effectively to meet organisational, local and national priorities and the needs of the people we work with. We use data and evaluations of the impact of previous planning priorities and learning programmes to inform future resourcing decisions. We diligently implement relevant health and safety legislation and are vigilant in ensuring the security

and safety of all users and visitors. As a result, our buildings are secure, and any health and safety issues are identified and addressed promptly'

Head teachers are expected to consider the challenge questions in HGIOS4 to self-evaluate their current processes to inform improvement. This Quality Indicator will be more rigorously considered during yearly training to ensure that those with budget responsibilities are aware of national and local expectations.

Aberdeen City Council devolves the management of these budgets to schools and services, but retains overall responsibility to ensure that total spending is kept within the resources available and that these resources are efficiently, fairly and equitably distributed.

4.4 School Expenditure Within Wider Strategic Planning

Decisions are made closest to the learner wherever possible and are delegated to headteachers and schools in line with the Education Reform programme. Schools are empowered to make the decisions that affect outcomes, while being part of a collaborative learning community and the Local Authority. Decisions about education spending at Local Authority and school level are made in a collegiate and transparent way, paying due regard to wider responsibilities including GIRFEC.

The Headteacher is accountable and responsible for the use of financial resources within their delegated responsibility following consultation with pupils, parents, staff and the wider community and with due consideration of the Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Local Authority National Improvement Framework Plan.

Strong and distributive leadership is necessary to establish effective systems to support the partnership working with pupils, parents, staff and the wider community to determine how best to utilise resource to deliver on local and school level plans.

Headteachers are accountable to both Aberdeen City Council and to their learning community for the leadership and management of resources within their settings and must comply with the financial regulations to ensure that the Local Authority is not compromised and that all legislation is adhered to. Any issues regarding adherence to financial and procurement regulations will be identified by school accountants and escalated to the school Quality Improvement Manager.

The Headteachers' Charter advises that headteachers are required to:
- Manage a delegated budget in a fair, equitable and transparent way, supported by the Local Authority and a fair, transparent and equitable local Devolved School Management Scheme
- Deploy the school's budget in accordance with best value principles and Local Authority procurement arrangements, with appropriate support and guidance from their Local Authority
- Play an active role in designing and reviewing recruitment and staffing approaches, both for their own school(s) and for the wider Authority
- Be empowered to design a staffing structure which best supports the school's curriculum and leadership requirements, working within their delegated staffing budget and supported by their Local Authority and Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) / Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) agreements and guidance

- Be integral to the appointment of staff in accordance with the best interests of children and young people, and work in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure good practice in recruitment and appointments, in line with SNCT/LNCT agreements and guidance

Head teachers, Local Authorities and LNCTs have a shared role in ensuring that the SNCT code of practice on HT responsibilities regarding staffing operates efficiently.

Further guidance is available in the SNCT code of practice Appendix 2.20
http://www.snct.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Appendix_2.20

4.5 Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers and Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers Agreements

HTs are required to operate within the agreed SNCT terms and conditions for all staff who come under this scheme. The SNCT handbook is available:
http://www.snct.org.uk/

In addition, some terms and conditions are governed by LNCT (local) agreements and there is also a requirement to adhere to these. Details of local agreements can be found on the Teachers' hub on Aberdeen City Council People Anytime, under the name of the agreement.
https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/?s=teachers

4.6 Publication Availability

The DSM scheme will be subject to 3-yearly review involving stakeholders and a peer Local Authority if appropriate and will be published following Committee Endorsement of the scheme. A summary document will be published on the Aberdeen City Website with a link provided on all school websites to ensure all stakeholders can easily access the scheme.

4.7 Available Training

Finance and the DSM Coordinator will provide twice yearly training on the strategic management of budgets. This will include all of the features of the DSM scheme, will explore expectations around QI Management of Resources to promote equity and exemplify how data should drive allocation of budgets. All new senior leaders and business managers will be expected to attend the first available session. It is expected that all staff managing budgets will have the knowledge and confidence to do so and be familiar with this document.
Aspiring leaders and LNCT Trade Union representatives will also be invited to attend the training. Ongoing support and guidance in implementing the DSM scheme will be available from school accountants.

Elected members will have access to a tailored training programme once the vacant post of DSM coordinator has been filled.

4.8 Consultation and Engagement

Meaningful consultation is central to decision making at Local Authority level with collaborative decision-making being led by the Chief Education Officer on areas such as budget allocations, staffing models and any redesign or savings options.

The Chief Education Officer chaired a DSM Group of head teachers and colleagues from HR and finance who oversaw the development of this scheme. Head teachers and central officers reviewed the impact of the proposed staffing formulae across sectors and made recommendations to the DSM Group to help get the scheme to the final draft stage.

Due to the enforced restrictions as a result of the pandemic, the draft scheme was shared with parents both through the schools' Groupcall system and through their Parent Council for feedback. Head teachers shared details of how the scheme will be applied (and allocation of resource) with staff and members of the wider community. Parents were asked to encourage their children to feedback their views on the draft scheme.

Central officers engaged with the citywide Parents Forum and the LNCT. All feedback was reviewed and used to finalise the DSM scheme.

4.9 Transparency
The DSM scheme has been written in plain English in order to maximise engagement and support transparency.

Headteachers are expected to ensure that any costs on families are minimised to ensure equality of access. However, where charges are deemed unavoidable, it is recommended that any anticipated pupil charges for curricular or extra-curricular activities (for example Home Economics, or school trips), or other costs (such as school uniform) requiring funding contributions from parents/carers are clearly detailed in school information published at the start of the academic session. Opportunities available to the pupil/families, or any discounts or exemptions available, for example in relation to pupils in receipt of free school meals, should be included within this information.

4.10 Local Priorities
Allocations of resource are informed by the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan. School are expected to consider the children's section of the LOIP and the NIF plan when deciding how to utilise resources.
https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2019-04/Local%20Outcome%20Improvement%20Plan%202016-26.pdf

Improving the wellbeing and attainment of children and young people is increasingly multi-agency in approach and it is important that decisions are taken with other key stakeholders wherever possible. This will include close collaboration with Locality Boards and with Partnership Forums to enable them to contribute towards shared agendas and allowing stronger partnership working between schools and with other agencies and stakeholders.

Local Authority decisions about education spending are expected to be made in a collegiate and transparent way, paying due regard to their wider responsibilities, including Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the role of Local Authorities as Corporate Parents. Budgets such as Partnership Forum budgets require a collaborative approach to decision making to ensure that all multi-agency resources and supports and that resource is fairly allocated across the locality.

Schools are encouraged to pool resources in order to access a shared service/resource across a locality and this innovation is encouraged to make best use of resource. Partnership Forum guidance is available at:

https://aberdeencitycouncilo365.sharepoint.com/sites/Network-EducationAberdeen/SitePages/Partnership-Forum-Guidance.aspx

4.11 Staffing Structures

A formula is used to allocate devolved resource to schools with SIMD and the size of the school being significant factors. Headteachers are expected to empower school communities to consider how best to utilise the resource available to them and to consider the need to amend their staffing structure to better serve local need, subject to the local agreement on staffing structures.

If the community deem that changes are required a business case should be developed for consultation and shared with the school QIM, HR and Finance to ensure that all parties are assured that the proposal will enable to the school to deliver on all statutory duties and that risks have been identified and mitigated. A statutory two-week consultation is then held where members of the school community including staff, trade unions, parents and children and young people have the opportunity to ask questions and comment. Finalised business cases are then sent to both the school QIM and to HR for approval. Guidance can be found at:

https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/teachers/revision-of-school-management-protocol-teachers/

Any further allocations of staffing (outwith devolved budgets) will be shared in a clear and transparent fashion.
A helpful ready reckoner will be provided in advance of each new financial year to support decision making.

4.12 Legislative and Contractual Requirements

Although staffing budgets are devolved to schools, Aberdeen City Council remains the employer and all major conditions of service continue to be negotiated at national level. Within the devolved scheme, schools must adhere to SNCT/LNCT national and local agreements in areas such as class sizes, staff structures, length of the school day etc. Pupil numbers will be the major factor in determining budget allocations, however account will also be taken of individual circumstances which may not be capable of adequate determination by a simple roll-based formula.

4.13 Staff Resource

Devolved budgets are issued to establishments at the beginning of the financial year (April) and specific budgets which are affected by pupil and teacher numbers will be subsequently adjusted in September / October if any significant changes have taken place.

Additional budget provision may be issued to establishments over the year as a result of:

- Receipt of additional budget by the authority in the form of a central government grant for dedicated additional school expenditure.
- The transfer of elements of central budgets prior to the end of the financial year.

Teaching and support staff, including admin and technical staff, are allocated to schools on a formula basis. Pupil support assistants are allocated on a formula basis, comprising a core allocation and roll-based element. Additional pupil support assistants are allocated annually to schools based on pupils needs as recorded in Seemis.

Staffing of Early Learning and Childcare settings is allocated annually by the Early Years team based on the model of delivery and pupil capacity of the setting.

Headteachers are involved in the design of recruitment processes, both for their own schools and for the Local Authority. Working collegiately with all stakeholders, head teachers can design a staffing structure that best supports learning and teaching in the school, within the budget delegated to the school by the Local Authority. Headteachers must comply with employment law and other relevant legislation, and the contractual obligations and policies of their Local Authority. Local Authorities and headteachers must have regard to supporting guidance and agreements developed by SNCT and LNCT (where appropriate).

The local authority is proactive in addressing teacher shortages which have been a feature of the staffing landscape for several years. Head teachers are involved in the recruitment of the current year's probationer teachers which takes place in February. Successful candidates are offered a permanent post with Aberdeen City Council, subject to the relevant checks and achieving full registration with GTCS. Headteachers are also involved in recruiting to the supply registers for teaching and support staff, with the recruitment process for these posts ongoing throughout the year. Officers are currently in discussion with HR and IT colleagues around how technology may be used to smarten the processes around this.

4.14 Professional Support teams, functions and transparency
Schools are provided with professional teams to support headteachers. This may be in the form of business managers in secondary schools, as well as central finance, human resources and facilities teams. Headteachers should contact the appropriate team for advice and guidance.

Additional information on staffing and financial processes for schools and services is available from:

https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/corehr/

Financial Regulations - Approved 2nd March 2020

Procurement Regulations - Approved 2nd March 2020

4.15 Budget underspend / overspend
Carry forward is the facility to transfer surpluses and / or deficits into the next financial year. All devolved budgets have this carry forward facility. Schools are limited to carry forward an underspend of 2.5% of the total of the devolved budgets into the following financial year. Intended use of carry forward should be identified in School Improvement Plans.

There is no limit to the carry forward of overspends. Finance contacts have regular meetings with schools and will identify potential overspends to the school's QIM at the earliest opportunity so the QIM can work with the head teacher to mitigate these.

4.16 Budget Flexibility and Alternative Spending
Headteachers have the flexibility to manage and determine the best use of the resources devolved to schools. Headteachers can overspend across devolved budget lines if they underspend on an equivalent basis across other devolved budget lines.

Where a headteacher wishes to use underspend arising from staffing vacancies flexibly, they are required to complete a Staff Vacancy Alternative Spend form and submit this to their Quality Improvement Manager for approval. When approved this spend should be coded to the 54399 account code and E1020 activity code, except for the case of Health and Safety spend which should be coded to E1023 activity code. Alternative spend requests in respect of staffing underspend should be approved if they support improvements to; the curriculum, learning and teaching or health and safety.

Approved spending on this basis needs to be completed within the period it is approved:

- Spending for Quarters 1 and 2 (April 1st to September 30th) requires approval by September 23rd.
- Spending for Quarters 3 and 4 (October 1st to March 31st) requires approval by December 14th.

Where the deadline for submission falls on a weekend, the deadline for submission will be the following Monday. No requests will be accepted following the December 14th deadline. Requests require to be approved and spent (or notified for accrual to the finance contact for the school) by the end of the period to which they apply. Retrospective requests will not be considered.

Finance contacts will monitor spending in the 54399 account code to ensure it matches the value of approved alternative spending. Unapproved spend found to be against this code will be re-allocated against the appropriate devolved account code. Finance contacts will process accruals for alternative spending where suitable evidence is produced that the spend should be set against the relevant period.

4.17 Review, methodology and Stakeholders
Any changes in financial governance made by Council will be reflected through a clearly communicated refresh of this guidance following the Council budget-setting meeting in February each year. A more formal and thorough evaluation and review will be undertaken on a three-yearly basis with a key element of this formal review being a peer review with a neighbouring Local Authority

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Appendix A Staff Vacancy Alternative Spend Form

APPENDIX B
Staffing formula and allocation Primary Teaching June 2020

APPENDIX C
Staffing formula and allocation Primary PSA June 2020

APPENDIX D
Staffing formula and allocation Secondary Teaching June 2020

APPENDIX E
Staffing formula and allocation Secondary PSA June 2020

APPENDIX F
Staffing formula and allocation School Admin Primary June 2020

APPENDIX G
Staffing formula and allocation School Admin Secondary June 2020

APPENDIX H
Staffing formula and allocation Technicians June 2020

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Aberdeen City Council

Devolved School Management Review Analysis June 2020

A review of the Devolved School Management Scheme was undertaken in light of refreshed Scottish Government Guidance. A range of informal engagement and consultation took place during the development stage. Formal consultation on a proposed new scheme took place between 14th and 29th May 2020

Responses were invited from staff and from parents/carers and pupils.
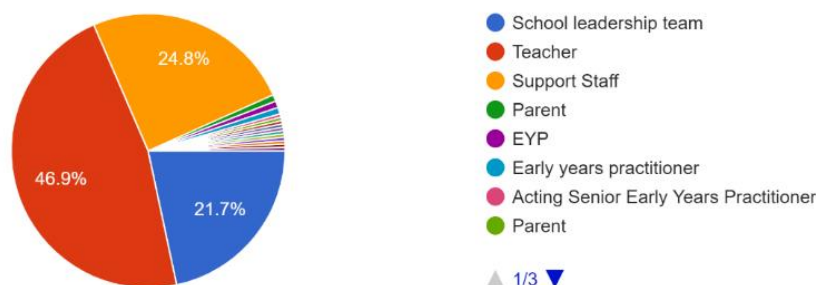
Section 1 - What did staff say?

254 survey responses were returned by staff.

In addition, emailed responses to the consultation were received from 3 secondary schools, the Aberdeen Secondary Head Teacher Association, 2 Parent Councils and 2 teaching trade unions.

Just under 47% of responses were from teaching staff although Pupil Support Assistants were well represented (just under 25%) and Early Years Practitioners accounted for just under 22% of responses.

Your Role
254 responses

- School leadership team
- Teacher
- Support Staff
- Parent
- EYP
- Early years practitioner
- Acting Senior Early Years Practitioner
- Parent

1/3

Just under 50% of respondents felt that the scheme was written in plain English and easy to understand, 25% submitted a neutral response with 24% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement.

1. The DSM scheme and associated information is accessible and is written in plain language.
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know
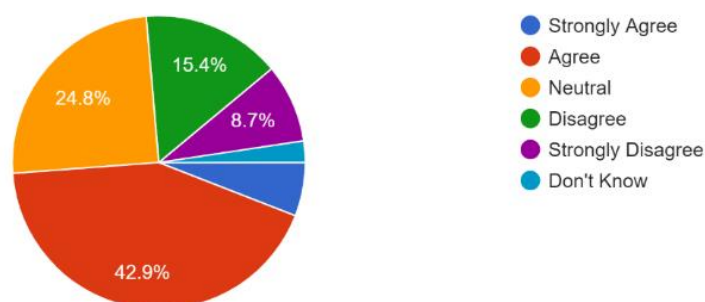
There was widespread agreement from over 90% that no Head Teacher should have a teaching commitment.

2a. Every school should have 1 fte Head Teacher with no teaching commitment
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
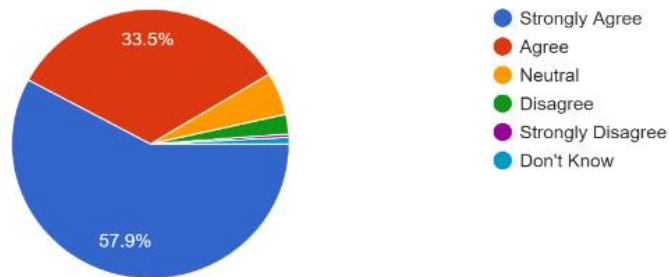- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

33.5%

57.9%

A similar number felt that staffing allocations should cover core teaching requirements and allocations for non-class contact time.

2b. Staffing allocation should cover core teaching requirements + NCCT
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

38.6%

51.6%
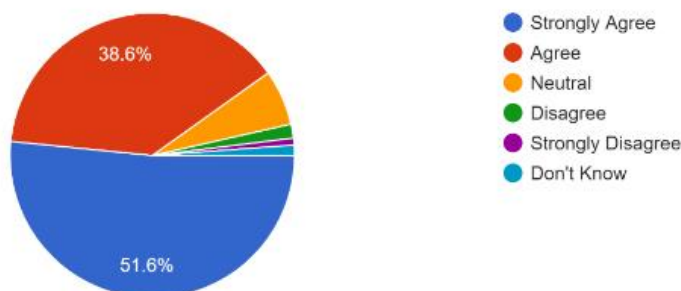
91% of colleagues agreed it is essential to observe national and local staffing agreements.

2c. National and local staffing agreements must be observed
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

46.1%

44.9%
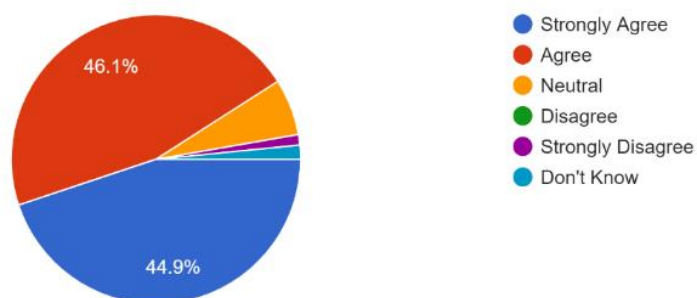
The requirement for all schools to have a dedicated allocation of Support for Learning drew strong agreement. This also came through in the comments submitted where free text was invited.

2d. Every school should have a dedicated allocation of SFL to enable them to meet the needs of their pupils
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

The formula for the allocation of staff resource drew more mixed responses with just over 54% agreeing or offering a neutral response compared to just under 37% disagreeing or strongly disagreei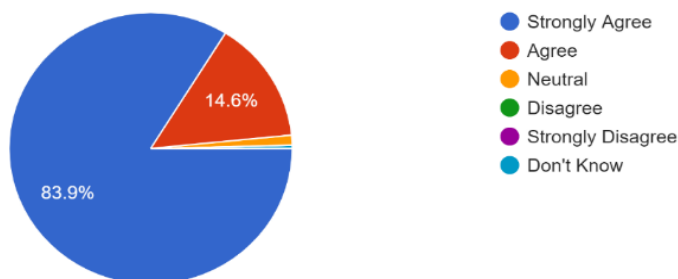ng that the formula is fair and transparent. Closer scrutiny of the data would suggest that those working in a school where they are likely to benefit from the revised scheme were most likely to give a favourable response, which is perhaps unsurprising. Comments also indicated having an awareness of the number of different factors to be taken into account made it more difficult for people to quantify fairness.

3. The formula for allocation of staffing resources is fair and transparent.
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know
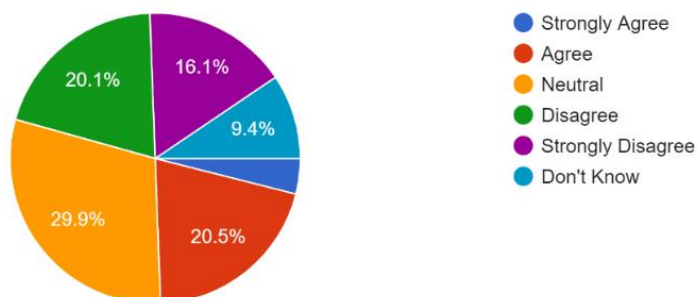
The need for the formula allocation to reflect school roll and SIMD was largely agreed with. Only 11% of respondents disagreed.

4. It is appropriate that the allocation of resources to schools is calculated using a formula which takes account of school roll and SIMD.
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

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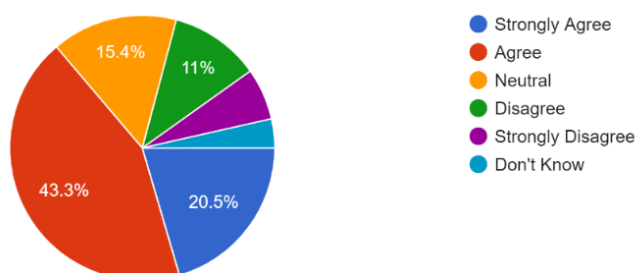The majority of respondents agreed or provided a neutral response when asked if the scheme reflected the principles of the Scottish Government guidance.

5a. The draft scheme meets the expectations set out in the Scottish Government guidance and reflects the principle of Subsidiarity and Empowerment
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know
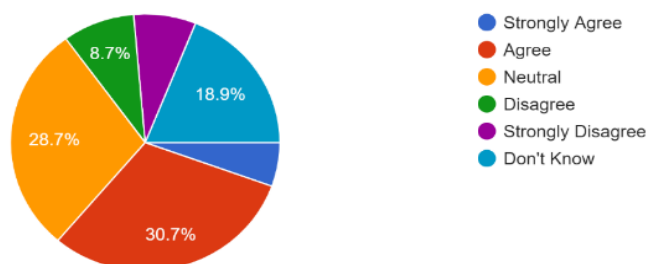
5b. The draft scheme meets the expectations set out in the Scottish Government guidance and reflects the principle of Collaboration
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

5c. The draft scheme meets the expectations set out in the Scottish Government guidance and reflects the principle of Accountability and Responsibility
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

5d. The draft scheme meets the expectations set out in the Scottish Government guidance and reflects the principle of Clarity and Equity
254 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

49% of respondents felt that the scheme made the budget holder responsibilities clear.

6. The draft scheme makes it clear what the responsibility of budget holders is and is easy to follow.
254 responses

40% of respondents feeling that the scheme would support collaborative decision making.
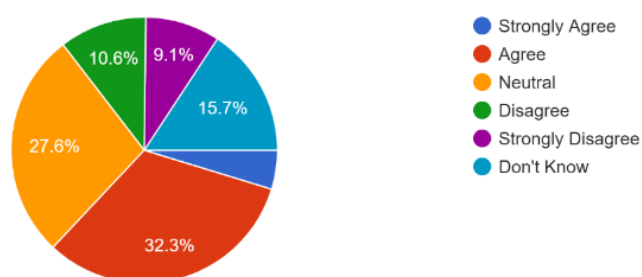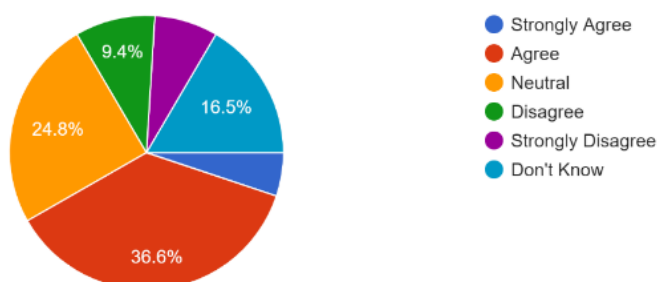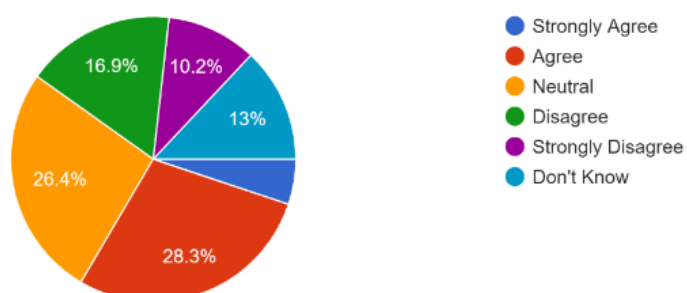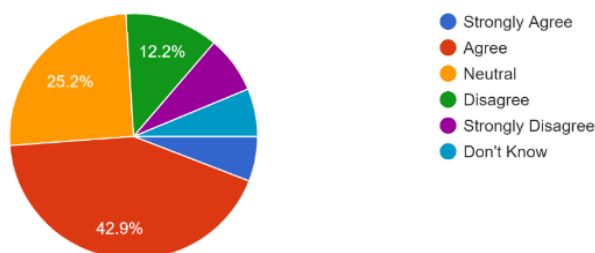
7. The principles set out in the draft scheme enable collaborative decision making at a local level.
254 responses
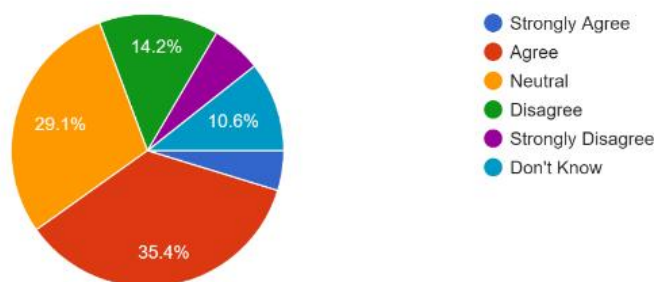
Summary analysis

Further scrutiny of the data shows that schools likely to benefit from the revised staffing formulae were more likely to respond favourably to the questions posed, which is unsurprising. 7 respondents noted that, although they disagreed with the new allocations, the formula was clear and transparent.

The Secondary HT association noted that, "There has been a need to review staffing allocations for many years and this has been under discussion for some time within ACC. The new formula avoids the historical ambiguities present in the previous formula."

34 responses expressed concern about the impact of the proposals on Principal Teacher posts, capacity to deliver a wide range of subjects and impact on smaller schools (3 of these were identical) 17 responses (3 of which were identical) expressed a view that the proposals were discriminatory towards small secondary schools.

17 responses noted that the timing of the consultation was unwelcome. It is accepted that the timing could have been improved although the need to work to budget set by Council in February necessitated introduction of a new scheme.

26 responses expressed a view that the proposals would impact negatively on supporting learners in terms both of meeting needs and raising attainment. 15 responses referred to reduced PSA hours in their school and a negative impact on equity, 11 responses expressed a view that the proposals discriminate against lower SIMD profile schools while 2 viewed them as discriminatory towards higher SIMD profile schools. 2 respondents noted the proposals shared resources more equitably.

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6 respondents described the draft scheme as clear and concise, 10 felt the scheme lacked clarity.

14 responses questioned the inclusion of energy costs and SQA exam costs in the devolved budget, questioning the ability of schools and Head Teachers to control the former and expressing concern that including the latter in the devolved budget may lead to a reduction in opportunity and choice for young people.

31 responses were critical of perceived budget cuts and criticised the timing of this in view of the current pandemic.

Analysis of returns from staff in schools who will see little change from the new scheme are broadly positive or neutral. Responses from schools which have historically had higher levels of resources than are proposed within the draft scheme were generally less positive.

Section 2 - What did parents, carers and pupils say?

526 responses were received. 97% of responses were from parents and carers, with the remaining responses from pupils. It is acknowledged that the subject matter does not easily translate for pupils and a limited number of responses is not surprising. This will be taken account of when planning future consultation around DSM.

Status
526 responses
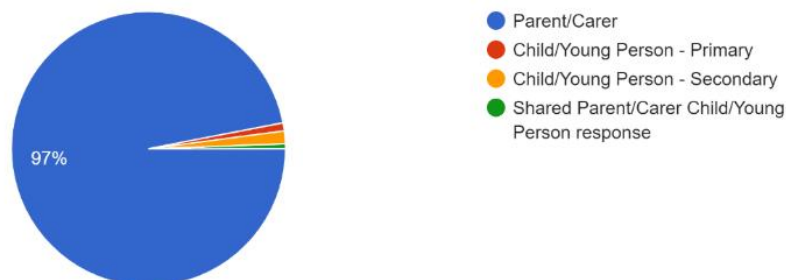
Almost all respondents agreed that a Head Teachers should not be regularly expected to teach a class. This mirrors the views from staff.

Every school should have a Head Teacher who is not regularly expected to teach classes.
526 responses
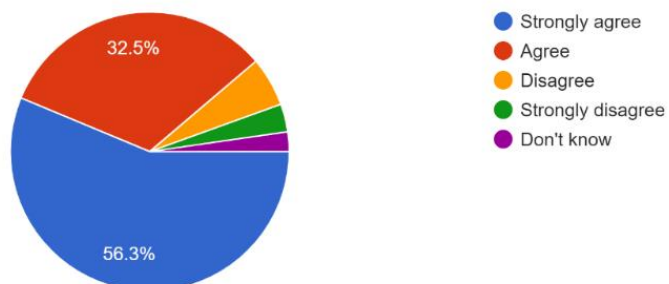
94% of parents, carers and pupils agreed that staffing should be allocated in line with national and local staffing agreements.

Every school should be allocated staff in line with national and local staffing agreements.
526 responses
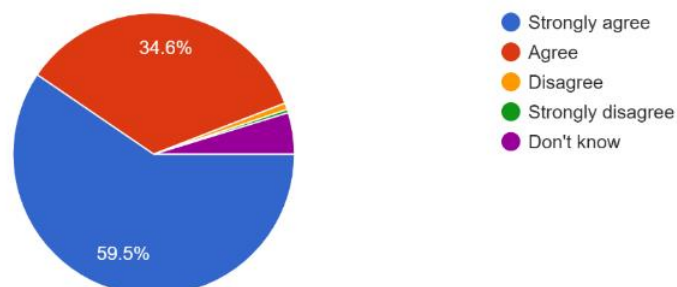
98% agreed that school allocations of Support for Learning were necessary. The need for all schools to have an allocation of Support for Learning came consistently through the feedback from staff and parents/carers and pupils.

Every school should have a dedicated allocation of Support for Learning staff to allow them to support the needs of all their learners.
526 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

17.3%
81.2%
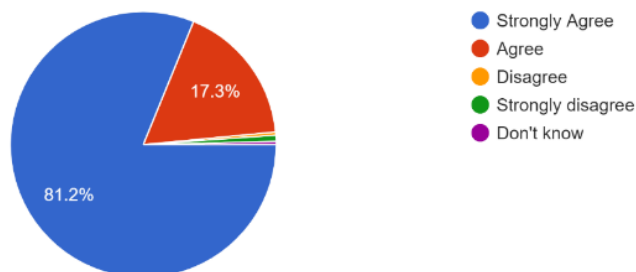
Almost all parents, carers and pupils strongly agreed that the context of the school should take account of local circumstance.

The staffing allocation should take account of the number of pupils in the school and information about the school's community.
526 responses

Strongly Agree	360 (68.4%)
Agree	148 (28.1%)
Disagree	10 (1.9%)
Strongly Disagree	6 (1.1%)
Dont know	3 (0.6%)
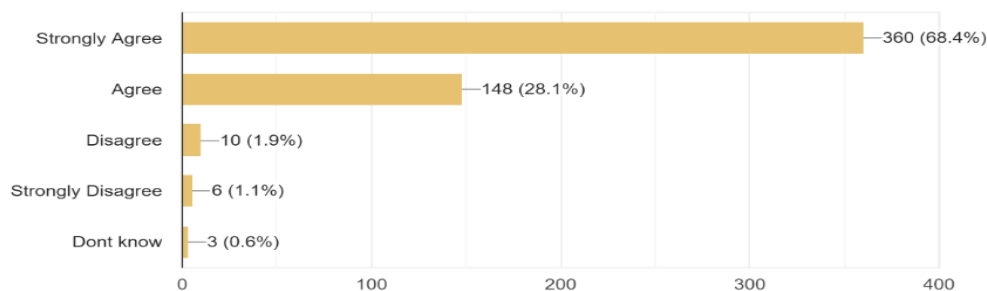
Parents, carers and pupils almost all agreed that the guidance promotes shared decision making and welcomed this.

The DSM guidance promotes shared decision making with staff, parents, pupils and the wider community where appropriate.
526 responses

Strongly Agree	196 (37.3%)
Agree	247 (47%)
Disagree	33 (6.3%)
Strongly Disagree	10 (1.9%)
Dont know	43 (8.2%)
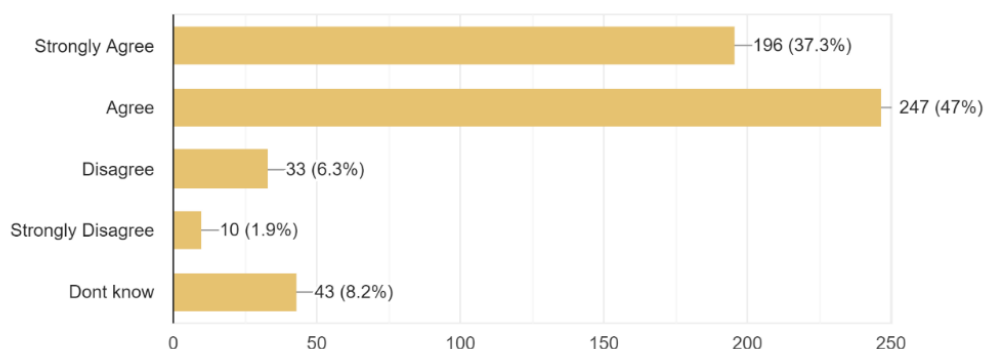
75% of parents, carers and pupils feel that the scheme is clear and easy to understand.

The proposed scheme is clear and easy to understand.
526 responses

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	107 (20.3%)
Agree	292 (55.5%)
Disagree	57 (10.8%)
Strongly Disagree	22 (4.2%)
Dont know	53 (10.1%)
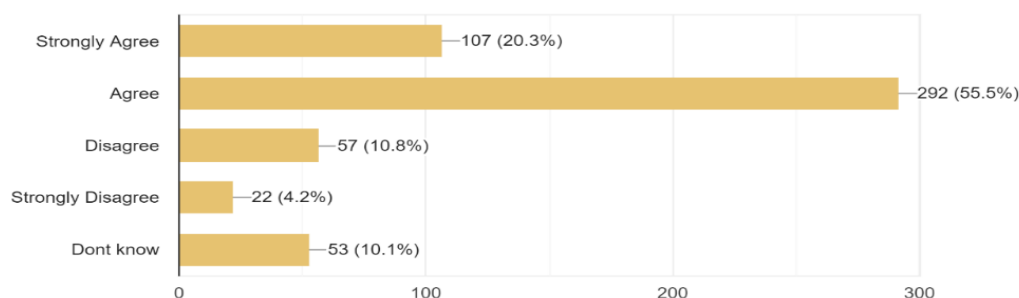
Summary analysis

From the additional comments provided, there appears to be some correlation of negative views with some of the school staff returns. This is unsurprising and may reflect comments from schools who are likely to see some budget reduction from a new scheme. 9 respondents referred specifically to removal of management posts or to managers teaching.

35 parent/carer responses expressed concern about the impact of the proposals on equity of provision, while 5 respondents welcomed the proposals.

Additional commentary from parents and pupils evidences a strong need to focus on allocations of support for learning to all schools to ensure the needs of those learners with additional support needs can be met. This features in around 30 responses

7 responses echoed the staff view that the timing of the consultation was not ideal. As noted previously this is accepted; but was unavoidable for the reasons stated.

15 responses expressed the view that DSM will add to Head Teachers' workload and a similar number made reference to a need for training and support to schools in dealing with DSM. It is possible that some of those responding are unaware of Head Teachers' current obligations in respect of DSM.

Including energy and exam costs in the devolved budget was raised as a concern by 11 respondents and mirrors the feedback from staff in this area.

399 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft scheme is clear and easy to understand, however a total of 31 responses refer to lack of clarity and transparency, use of jargon and a need for prior understanding to be able to make comparisons or comment. It is acknowledged that this is not an easy subject to make accessible to those without prior knowledge of it and this will be considered in any future consultation around DSM

While 5 respondents welcomed the involvement of parents in making decisions around use of funds, a similar number felt that teachers and Head Teachers are best placed to make such decisions.

22 responses criticised perceived budget cuts, suggesting schools need more funding not less.

Section 3 – Implications for the draft scheme

Rationale

In 2019 the Scottish Government instructed local authorities to review their Devolved School Management (DSM) schemes and published detailed guidance around the expectations of schemes, along with a framework for revised schemes to follow.

A working group comprising local authority officers and Head Teachers was established in November 2019 agreed there were some aspects of the existing arrangements which required to be addressed as part of the overall review of DSM. These included:

- Existing arrangements for deciding school staffing allocations lacked clarity and transparency

- There were a number of historical arrangements which were not all still relevant

- A presumption of mainstreaming had led to an increase in the number of pupils with additional support needs in almost all mainstream schools

- Significant lack of resource in some settings

Recommendations

Based on the feedback received it is recommended that the draft scheme should be adopted with the following considerations

- Energy costs should be removed from schools' devolved budget. Feedback supports the view that these costs are largely out with the control of the Head Teacher and the ability to control energy costs varies from school to school depending on the age and condition of the building
- SQA costs should be removed from the devolved budget. Feedback supports the view that including these could lead to reduced opportunities for young people to be presented for exams if financial concerns were a factor
- The DSM scheme includes staffing budgets which will be devolved within the parameters set out in the draft scheme
- Alternative spend requests in respect of staffing underspend will be approved if they support improvements to; the curriculum, learning and teaching, wellbeing or health and safety
- The DSM scheme is a cash-based scheme. Head Teachers working collegiately with their school communities have flexibility within this to create structures to suit their specific needs budget provided these are within budget and local and national agreements are observed
- Officers will work with Finance colleagues to ensure Head Teachers are provided with regular, accurate financial information and advice to enable them to monitor budgets effectively
- Consideration should be given to the timescale for implementation for any school likely to have to review their school structure to ensure that existing agreements for changing school structures can be adhered to
- In making any changes all local and national agreements (LNCT and SNCT) will be adhered to

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Supporting Learners
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/20/126
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Craig McDermott
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.2

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To seek approval to align the findings of All our Children and All their Potential recommendations with the work of the ACC Supporting Learners Workstream and implement changes to our operating systems in light of restrictions necessary during the recovery phase.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

2.1   approves the amended Supporting Learners Programme Plan (Appendix B), which takes account of the recommendations from the national 'Support for Learning: All Our Children and All Their Potential' Report (Appendix A); and

2.2   endorses the agile approach being taken to ensure ongoing provision of support for learners.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1.1 A review of the implementation of additional support for learning in schools was instructed by the Scottish Government in January 2019. Angela Morgan was appointed as the independent Chair of the review and the Report of the review entitled 'Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential' was published in June 2020 ("the Report").

3.1.2 The remit of the Review was to consider the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation and specifically:
- how additional support for learning works in practice across early learning and childcare centres, primary, secondary and special schools (including enhanced provision, services and units);
- where children and young people learn within the balance of the provision set out above, recognising that not all local authority areas have all of those provisions;

- the quality of learning and support, including overall achievement and positive destinations achieved postschool;
- the different approaches to planning and assessment to meet the needs of children and young people;
- the roles and responsibilities of support staff, teaching staff, leadership roles;
- education authorities and national agencies; and
- the areas of practice that could be further enhanced through better use of current resources to support practice, staffing or other aspects of provision.

3.1.3 The Education Service has a Supporting Learners Workstream and the progress of the Workstream is routinely reported to Elected Members at the Education Operational Delivery Committee. It is proposed that the recommendations of the Report be built into the work of this Workstream in advance of any national instruction to implement to ensure that we proactively respond to this report.

3.2 **All our Children and All their Potential Recommendations**

3.2.1 The findings of the national Report are wide ranging with recommendations made for a range of partners across the wider education system. The author concludes that, "tweaking" systems and provision will be insufficient to ensure that children are seen as individuals rather than children in need of 'additional' support. For this reason, The Education Service propose to be proactive in our response.

3.2.2 The Report recommends that the interlinked and co-dependent recommendations are not a quick fix and that a more significant change in culture led by visible senior leaders is required. Adaptability and flexibility are noted as being of crucial importance. This aligns closely with the findings of the Supporting Learners Workstream. The Report also reiterates the need to move away from deficit language of old.

3.2.3 The gap between intention and reality are highlighted in the Report. Our work to become a Child Friendly City will be of critical importance as we implement the recommendation to ensure an effective feedback loop is established to support the design and delivery of services for children.

3.2.4 The use of data is often referred to in the Report with recommendations made to ensure that the whole system, including national and local government, uses more appropriate measures of success and less reliance on overly traditional Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) results for example. This complements our work to broaden the range of learning pathways available and move away from the more traditional qualification routes.

3.2.5 The need to measure the impact of investment in Support Staff is highlighted and this chimes with the work being progressed across the Local Authority. The Report goes on to recommend some national guidance in terms of how teachers and support staff should work together to improve outcomes for learners.

3.2.6 Reference is made to the need to ensure that particular consideration is given to those with additional support needs during strategic planning at Local Authority level with active and productive engagement across Community Planning Partners. It is proposed that our Supporting Learners Workstream be a consistent feature of our work over the coming years to ensure this is a continued focus of improvement.

3.2.7 Recommendations are made about the extent to which Initial Teacher Education prepares new staff to work with children with additional support needs. It goes on to promote high quality professional learning as key in keeping with our current programme. Of particular interest is the recommendation to nationally promote the role of those with a more enhanced levels of skill in Support for Learning roles.

3.2.8 In keeping with our local findings, the quality of transitions has been raised alongside a need to foster positive relationships and ensure that families are more actively included in the development of key guidance. This recommendation will be built into the working practices of the Supporting Learners Workstream as will the recommendation to further promote mediation.

3.2.9 The Review notes the preparation required to plan for the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); this aligns with our work to become a Child Friendly City.

3.2.10 The service welcomes a recommendation that the Scottish Government consider the interface between the different levels of planning for children and young people and the relationship between the Local Authority and other partners such as health in supporting children with additional support needs.

3.2.11 The review noted the importance of accessible information and work is progressing at pace to address this area with much already achieved. In keeping with the national recommendation, quality assurance mechanisms will be amended to reflect these findings. It is proposed that quality improvement activity planned from August to December centre around these findings.

3.3   Local Authority action to address the published Recommendations

3.3.1 The Report contains numerous recommendations to Scottish Ministers and COSLA. These recommendations are grouped under nine themes and, should they be accepted, the report indicates the national Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group will oversee progress made against them. Recommendation 9.1 proposes an annual progress report is developed for the purposes of quality assurance and scrutiny. Given the close alignment to the work of the Supporting Learners Workstream, it is prudent to proactively subsume the recommendations into the ongoing improvement activity and plan of the Supporting Learners Workstream.

3.3.2 In order to show clear alignment a refreshed Supporting Learners Programme Plan is available for approval in Appendix B.

3.3.3 The Community Planning partnership Child Friendly City Plan features corresponding recommendations and the service will ensure that the work of the Supporting Learners Workstream complements but does not replicate ongoing work to become a Child Friendly City.

3.4   Supporting Learners during the Recovery Phase

3.4.1 COVID-19 school closures led to a significant and rapid change in our operating environment. This necessitated a quick review of systems and processes to ensure that Aberdeen City Council could effectively support the education and wellbeing of children and young people in a digital environment.

3.4.2 All schools worked hard to ensure that children, young people and families were familiar with Google Classroom and started to identify families without access to a suitable device and connectivity. Schools were asked to identify and plan appropriate support for children and young people identified as vulnerable.

3.4.3 The Education Staged Intervention Framework was refreshed to guide practice and provide minimum expectations around the level of support to be afforded to families. This was extended as Multi-Agency Operational Guidance for practitioners across the partnership to clarify how GIRFEC should be delivered.

3.4.4 As the Service re-opens school buildings there is a need to consider how support services operate whilst unable to visit children and young people in situ. Our plans must take account of what we have learned over the past 5 months and be kept under review as physical distancing constraints are amended.

3.5   How have the needs of learners changed?

3.5.1 A system that enabled staff across Children and Family Services to make a request for assistance was established upon the closure of school buildings on 20 March 2020. The Emergency Support Forum (ESF) – comprising Education, Social Work and Community Learning Officers – was established to review requests and allocate proportionate support based on emerging vulnerability. This included: Locality Hub support, increased targeted intervention from Education and/or Social Work, and/or input from Family Learning, Healthy Minds and Youth Work.

3.5.2 Data gathered aligned with national guidance, was cognisant of agreed vulnerability markers, and a weekly report was generated as a means of robustly tracking, monitoring and responding to the data, which indicated the changing needs of children/young people and their families.

3.5.3 An average of 18.1 requests for assistance were received per week in the period April – June 2020: 54.0% of requests pertained to children/young people entitled to free school meals, 22.6% to children/young people with additional support needs, and 20.4% to children/young people subject to ongoing child protection investigation/registration. 12.8% of requests involved children/young people looked after at home.

3.5.4 Escalating need with regards to family circumstances/the family home was noted in the majority of requests, with violence in the home featuring regularly. 27.2% of requests noted substance misuse as an emerging or enduring need, and 48.5% similarly identified the mental health needs of families.

3.5.5 A regular review of Hub placements took place to ensure the intervention was correctly matched to the needs of the child/young person and their family. Evidence gathered suggests risk mitigation and maintenance was successful in most cases. Anecdotal evidence suggests the multi-agency approach enabled families to access the right support at the right time. An independent Education Scotland evaluation endorsed the approach being taken to support these children/young people.

3.5.6 Evidence gathered from those requesting assistance suggests the systems and processes adopted were positively received, particularly the timeous turn-around and feedback time.

3.5.7 National and local evidence tells us that the trauma experienced by children/young people and their families is significant and that this type of support will be required during recovery and beyond, particularly given the uncertainty surrounding virus resurgence and further localised restrictions. The recommendations highlight the importance of cohesive multi-agency working, in-line with GIRFEC, such as that provided by the Emergency Support Forum and Locality Hubs.

3.6 How will physically distanced support be provided?

3.6.1 Staff across the education service began a programme of remote digital delivery when school buildings closed on 20 March 2020. Consultation with children/young people, parents/carers, and staff endorsed our direction of travel, particularly in terms of the use of Google Suite for Education (G:Suite).

3.6.2 The Digital Learning Hub was established as a go-to place for learners, parents/carers, and staff. The Hub includes various sources of professional learning for staff to ensure confidence in this area remains high. Peer (1:1) support is available to staff from colleagues who have undertaken Google's Certified Educator programme.

3.6.3 Children/Young people, parents/carers, and staff make increasing use of Google Meet (and Microsoft Teams) in lieu of face-to-face meetings, and for remote learning and teaching. This practice quickly became the 'new normal' at a time when restrictions limited the scope of face-to-face interaction.

3.6.4 Various steps have been taken by the Education Service to mitigate against digital poverty, including: the use of Scottish Government funding to ensure all learners in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) vigintiles 1-3 (who have not already been issued with one) have access to a device; ensuring young people studying SQA courses have access to a device; and proportionate allocations to primary schools.

3.6.5 Given the significant advances made over the last few months, it is prudent the Education Service continue to build on this in order to maximise scope and capacity across all services. This is particularly important at a time when movement between educational settings is not possible, but the need to ensure the right support is available to children/young people at the right time is paramount.

3.7   What will this mean for individual services?

3.7.1 In-keeping with feedback from staff, a new, electronic support request mechanism has been developed. In consultation with the Team Around the Child, staff will access one digital form for seeking support for a child/young person. It is hoped this will remove the bureaucracy associated with previous practices. The use of a single mechanism supports greater consistency with regards to tracking and monitoring across the system, thus ensuring our direction of travel can remain responsive to need, ensuring no child/young person is left behind.

3.7.2 Current Scottish Government guidance prohibits staff working across multiple education settings as a mitigation against COVID-19 spread. Teachers and Pupil Support Assistants working in peripatetic services have, temporarily, been reallocated to schools as part of core staffing:

Service	FTE Reallocated to Primary		FTE Reallocated to Secondary		FTE Reallocated to Special	
	Teacher	PSA	Teacher	PSA	Teacher	PSA
English as an Additional Language Service	10.3	2.8	6.4			
Hearing Support Service	2.8		0.6		1.6	
Vision Support Service	1.0		1.6		0.2	
ASPIRE Service			2.0		2.4	
Specialist Early Intervention Team (SEIT) Service	1.3	1.9	3.0	1.5		

It should be noted that, in some instances, staff have been based in a school to ensure continuity of support for children/young people with specific needs (e.g. visual impairment, hearing impairment): this FTE is omitted above.

3.7.3 The following proposal is based on the 'I do, We do, You do' principle of collegiate working to 'get it right' for children and young people. Similarly, it mirrors the '5 Roles of Support for Learning' and the '5 Core Functions of the Educational Psychology Service'.

Service	Proposed Universal Support (applicable to all Services)	Proposed Targeted Support

Education Psychology Service	**Aberdeen City's Support Services Build Capacity in the Team Around the Child to Get it Right for the Individual Child/Young Person**
	
	Consultancy
	➢ Online consultation with requesting member(s) of staff to offer initial advice and support.
	
	➢ Maintenance of an online hub (website), which can be readily accessed by children/young people, parents/carers, and staff e.g. 'First Port of Call for All Services for Everyone in the Team Around the Child'.
	
	Multi-Agency Working
	➢ Attendance at planning meeting(s) with 'Team Around the Child' to support wider planning and target setting.
		▪ Direct input with an individual learner or a group of learners:
		  o change and loss;
		  o emotional intelligence;
		  o nurture;
		  o play and communication.
		  o resilience.
		▪ Further, bespoke assessment to inform Individualised Education Programme (IEP)/Child's Plan/Coordinated Support Plan (CSP) targets and targeted inputs.
		▪ Specialist planning input to support the delivery of educational outcomes for an individual learner e.g. environmental adaptation, curriculum adaptation, solution-focused approaches.
		▪ Transitions support.
		▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
		▪ Education Psychology Service (EPS) Helpline and Hub.

Autism Outreach Service	**Contribution to Continuous Lifelong Professional Learning (CLPL) & Staff Development**
	➢ Sign-posting of resources to support implementation of universal learning and teaching strategies.
	
	➢ Offer of CLPL (delivered digitally or face-to-face) to support implementation of universal learning and teaching strategies (inc. modelling of best practice and environmental adaptation).
		▪ Direct or cooperative input with children/young people supporting the:
		  o development of individualised work systems, curricula and timetables;
		  o development of social skills;
		  o emotional regulation and literacy;
		  o impact of diagnosis;
		  o transitions;
		  o understanding of sensory sensitivities.

	Identification & Assessment	Training for practitioners in the use of the Autism Toolbox and the Autism Classroom Checklist.
	➢ Assessment (via observation, further consultation, review of learning materials etc.) to inform CLPL needs, planning, and universal support.	▪ Training for practitioners in the use of the Autism Toolbox and the Autism Classroom Checklist. ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service		▪ Direct and cooperative (digital and face-to-face) input for Level 1 and 2 learners (and/or staff supporting the teaching of these learners). ▪ Direct delivery of Scottish and Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) 3-6 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in the Senior Phase. ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
ASIPRE Service		▪ Further, bespoke assessment to inform IEP/Child's Plan/CSP targets and targeted inputs (by school staff). ▪ Direct (digital and face-to-face) input with children and young people to support Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs. ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
Specialist Early Intervention Team (SEIT) Service		▪ Further, bespoke assessment to inform IEP/Child's Plan/CSP targets and targeted inputs (by school staff). ▪ Direct (digital and face-to-face) input with children and young people to support Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs. ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
Hearing Support Service (HSS)		▪ Direct (digital or face-to-face) cyclical consultation with children/young people with hearing impairment.

		▪ Direct and cooperative support for children/young people with significant hearing loss (inc. comorbid conditions). ▪ Transitions support. ▪ Direct input with children at Aberdeen School for the Deaf. ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
Vision Support Service (VSS)		▪ Direct (digital or face-to-face) cyclical consultation with children/young people with visual impairment. ▪ Direct and cooperative support for children/young people with significant sight loss (inc. comorbid conditions). ▪ Transitions support. ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
Language Support Provision Service		▪ Further, bespoke assessment to inform IEP/Child's Plan/CSP targets and targeted inputs (by school staff). ▪ Training for practitioners in administration of bespoke assessment and specialist teaching programmes. ▪ Direct (digital and face-to-face) input with children as part of the Language Support Provision (LSP). ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice).
Dyslexia Support Service		▪ Further, bespoke assessment to inform IEP/Child's Plan/CSP targets and targeted inputs (by school staff). ▪ Training for practitioners in administration of bespoke assessment and specialist teaching programmes (inc. use of the Dyslexia Toolkit).

| | | | ▪ Direct and cooperative (digital and face-to-face) input with children/young people. |
| | | | ▪ Family engagement (including supporting the capture of parent and learner voice). |

3.7.4   The approach to service delivery and reshape – Universal and Targeted – will remain cognisant of, and responsive to, data received via the request for assistance mechanism: our direction of travel will be needs-led. This agile approach will enable services, and the Team Around the Child, to best-meet the needs of children/young people and their families.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Any re-design will make use of existing budgets.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The Local Authority has many legal duties including those of:
- ▪ The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
- ▪ The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- ▪ The Equality Act 2010
- ▪ The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The approach being taken to develop the programme of support outlined in this report will assist the Council as Education Authority to fulfil these duties more effectively, and secure necessary and appropriate education and additional support for our children and young people.

6.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Risk of not achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.	L	Potential changes to our provision will enable primary prevention and early intervention thereby reducing potential risk.
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial claims and legal challenge (tribunals).	M	Mitigated by services being realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and prevent escalation of need.
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the needs of	L	Mitigated by offering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under The Education

	vulnerable young people.		(Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010.
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	L	Mitigated by realigning services to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City today.
Reputational	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners.	L	Services realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City.
Environment / Climate	Risk of environmental factors inhibiting positive outcomes for learners	L	Service realignment will strengthen universal/targeted support and sharing of best practice, thus preventing escalation of need through strengthened practice and reasonable adjustment.

7. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	This report outlines proposals to realign education support services to ensure children/young people (their families) and staff can access timeous support for the purposes of securing positive outcomes for learners. Realignment will be proactively undertaken within the context of the 'Support for Learning: All Our Children and All Their Potential' Report. In particular, this report links to the Policy Statement in relation to People, 7: 'Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city'.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes 1 and 6. Continued judicious use of funding and appropriate targeting of additional resources will ensure that children and young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are fully accessing education and more likely to achieve their potential and contribute to the economy. Specific links: Stretch outcome 1 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors y 2026 Stretch outcome 6 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals in this report seek to ensure the best use of resource in the system, promoting an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that appropriate and timely personalised support is available to them. Effective use of all resources and allowing each school community full control of these resources will help to ensure all initiatives and interventions are selected and implemented based on the needs of each school community and planned effectively to impact positively on all children and young people and are particularly targeted at those who are adversely affected by poverty.

	Specific links to:
	Stretch Outcome 4 90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026
	Stretch Outcome 6 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026, Stretch Outcome 7 Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Underpinning the work of all schools in Aberdeen City is reducing the poverty related attainment gap and achieving excellence and equity for all.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 as amended (and associated Code of Practice) Equality Act 2010

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

A   *Support for Learning: All Our Children and All Their Potential* (Report from Independent review)
B   Updated Supporting Learners Programme Plan (Version 2.0 – August 2020)

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Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential

Thank you and acknowledgements

With many thanks to the children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners who have shared their experiences and offered their views to this Review.

Thanks also to the members of the Review Steering Group and colleagues who have supported the Review process and to Professor Melissa Van Dyke and to The Carnegie Trust.

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Introduction from the Independent Chair, Angela Morgan

At some time in our lives, most of us have had the experience of being outside – or despite being inside- a public service or system and feeling vulnerable and ill equipped to navigate it. A family member health crisis for example.

Those recollections from my own life have been strongly in my mind throughout this Review process. I believe strongly that the question "What would I want for the children and young people I love and care about?" should be considered by all of us involved in providing public services and making decisions for fellow citizens of our communities. It must be a benchmark for testing those decisions.

One of the striking aspects of this Review process has been how many people I have heard from who, having spoken to me from the perspective of their work roles with children and young people, have then told me about their experience as parents, or indeed vice versa. Similarly, many professionals concluded a conversation with the comment:

"I have a personal interest in this as my nephew/friend's son/neighbour's daughter…needs support and I know their experience has been…"

There is great potential in this shared level of emotional investment in children and young people who have additional support needs. It suggests we can strengthen communication and relationships, which are the fuel for making progress in complex areas of public service delivery.

Conversely, the challenge in addressing this issue lies in respecting this high emotional investment while applying the necessary rigor of analysis. Drawing valid conclusions and proposing potentially uncomfortable recommendations must be done with respect and sensitivity.

Scotland has ground breaking, rights widening legislation[1] for children who face additional barriers to learning and to fulfilling their potential. The most recent statistics tell us that these children comprise 30.9% of our school age population.[2]

However, this issue is of vital importance to all of us, not only those 30.9%.

How all our children and young people experience their schools and communities matters. Showing that people who are different to them are valued,

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[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/contents
[2] https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-schools-scotland-no-10-2019-edition/

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respected and included, shapes the beliefs and attitudes, which will underpin their own contribution as adults to our communities and wider Scottish society.

Most importantly, a promise has been made to children and young people who, due to a range of barriers, need help to flourish and fulfil their potential. They are also the children and young people who are most likely to struggle to have their voices heard.

In the actions that follow this Review, and for the range of stakeholders involved in their delivery, the focus must remain on the children and young people who are at the heart of this legislation.

Scotland's commitment to incorporation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child[3] in 2021 means that is a central requirement, not an option.

This report refers throughout to children and young people. This should be understood as those who have additional support needs as set out under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.[4]

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[3] https://www.gov.scot/news/strengthening-childrens-rights/
[4] The language to describe professionals or the workforce throughout the report is interchangeable, and reflects the different ways in which those professionals describe themselves.

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Background

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended) places duties on local authorities to identify, meet and review the needs of children and young people. It gives children[5] and young people[6], parents and carers a number of rights, including rights to ask for additional support needs to be identified and planned for; to receive advice and information about their or their child's additional support needs; be part of discussions about the support that they or their child will receive; and access dispute resolution procedures to resolve concerns.

Since the Act was implemented, there has been concern from schools and families about the availability and effectiveness of support for all children and young people. There are currently 30.9% of children and young people in schools in Scotland with additional support needs.

These needs are diverse; vary considerably in longevity, stability and complexity. Consequently, different types and levels of support are required from education providers and other public services.

The conditions are not mutually exclusive. This Review heard about increasing numbers of children and young people where issues due to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are compounded by social, emotional, behavioural problems linked to poverty and inequality.

The statistics on young people entering the Secure Care and Youth Justice systems affirm this, highlighting that "51% of young people in secure care accommodation had at least one disability, (defined as "a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities").[7]

The legislation clearly states that an additional support need can arise for any reason and be of short or long term duration. Additional support may be required to overcome needs arising from learning environment; health or disability; family circumstances or social and emotional factors.

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[5] Aged between 12-15, subject to assessments of capacity and consideration of impact on wellbeing.
[6] As defined at section 29(1) of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004 (as amended)
[7] https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2017-2018/

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The supporting guidance[8] unhelpfully complicates people's understanding of what an additional support need may be by listing a selection of conditions, which may require additional support:

- have motor or sensory impairments;
- have low birth weight;
- are being bullied;
- are children of parents in the Armed Forces;
- are particularly able or talented;
- have experienced a bereavement;
- are affected by imprisonment of a family member;
- are interrupted learners;
- have a learning disability;
- have barriers to learning as a result of a health need, such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder;
- are looked after by a local authority or who have been adopted;
- have a learning difficulty, such as dyslexia;
- are living with parents who are abusing substances;
- are living with parents who have mental health problems;
- have English as an additional language;
- are not attending school regularly;
- have emotional or social difficulties;
- are on the child protection register;

- are refugees; or
- are young carers.

In September 2019, John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, commissioned this Review and appointed Angela Morgan as the Independent Chair. The remit for the Review was agreed between the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and representatives of each formed a Steering Group. The remit of the Review made clear that: the principle of presumption of mainstreaming for children and young people was not under review; and the relevant issues would be considered within existing resources.

The remit of the Review was to consider the implementation of the legislation:

- how additional support for learning (ASL) works in practice, across early learning and childcare centres, primary, secondary and special schools (including enhanced provision, services and units);
- where children and young people learn within the balance of the provision set out above, recognising that not all local

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[8] https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/

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authority areas have all of those provisions;
- the quality of learning and support, including overall achievement and positive destinations achieved post-school;
- the different approaches to planning and assessment to meet the needs of children and young people;
- the roles and responsibilities of support staff, teaching staff, leadership role, education authorities and national agencies; and
- the areas of practice that could be further enhanced through better use of current resources to support practice, staffing or other aspects of provision.

The Review began in September 2019 and concluded in February 2020 with the submission of this report and recommendations to Scottish Ministers and COSLA.[9]

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[9] Due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for the Scottish Government and Local Government to focus on an overriding priority of responding to it, publication of this report was slightly delayed.

Approach taken by the Review

The Review has undergone three phases.

Phase 1: Desk Review
August 2019 – September 2019

Analysis of evidence[10] published between 2017-2019, which highlighted key themes and concerns and contributed to shaping Phase 2.

Summary of Conclusions (taken directly from the Desk Review)

The desk review of current evidence has identified a number of common themes about what the strengths and challenges of implementation of additional support for learning are.

The qualitative evidence overwhelmingly suggests that there is a positive perception of the principle of inclusion.

There are a number of themes that have emerged from the evidence considered which focus on the challenges of implementation of additional support for learning. The most common of these are:

- Resources;
- Training;
- Exclusions;

- Parental involvement – accessibility and visibility of information;
- Type and access to provision;
- Access to specialist services and support from other agencies;
- The importance of partnership working in accessing Co-ordinated Support Plans, and in identification and assessment; and
- Variation in approach across local authorities.

Other reviews or policy developments, which are significant for the implementation of the ASL legislation, were noted[11]. This was in order to ensure that this Review did not duplicate work already completed or in progress. Where possible, there has been information sharing and collaboration to ensure this Review took into account current and planned developments.

Phase 2: Engagement and Listening
October 2019 - January 2020

The Review Chair took an early decision with the agreement of the Steering Group, to prioritise the time and resource of the Review to hear directly from those most involved and affected by the

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[10] Annex A
[11] For Example, the Independent Care Review, review of the GTCS Professional Standards, etc.

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implementation of the ASL legislation in practice. Considerable efforts were made to engage with children and young people; parents and carers with direct and lived experience; and practitioners, in and beyond education, who are directly involved in the delivery of services. The Review has taken an open and listening approach in order to learn about how children and young people's needs are currently being met. It started with the open question of what is most important from the contributors' perspective.

The focus of the Review within the remit and parameters has been shaped by those responses. Consequently, the main focus is on the experience of children and young people during primary and secondary school years.

Many different people and groups have shared their experiences, perspectives and views through the Chair's email address, in telephone calls and face to face meetings, individually and in groups. Representational, membership and specialist bodies and networks submitted documented comment and

analysis. This included summaries following sessions with their members.

The perspective of the agencies and leaders who hold responsibility at a strategic level within the statutory agencies has also been sought and considered within the process.

All contributors were given an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity to enable them to share information confidently and honestly.

Annex B provides an overview of engagement.

Phase 3: Report and Recommendations
February 2020

Taken together, these phases have enabled the Chair to gather evidence, complete analytical work, and reach conclusions to support recommendations for change.

The evidence analysis has additionally been quality assured by an independent associate in order to affirm the validity of the conclusions presented.

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Evidence heard by the Review: balancing perspectives

The Review was initiated due to the widespread acceptance that not all children and young people are flourishing, and that the legislation and implementation have not achieved all aims. Therefore it was anticipated, that the broad engagement process of the Review would be dominated by concerns and negative experiences. This proved to be the case.

There were also examples of excellent practice, dedicated professionals, loving families and thriving children and young people. However, there were too many stories of struggle and shortfalls; frustration, anxiety and stress for children and young people and their families. Frontline practitioners, and those directly supporting them, told similar stories.

Poor experiences do motivate people to speak out. However, the responses received affirm that the very complex challenges of meaningful inclusion and meeting additional support needs are a work in progress in Scotland.

Many across the contributor groups have welcomed the Review as an opportunity to be listened to. However, some stakeholders have expressed scepticism about the value of the Review and have chosen not to participate. This highlights a strong theme

expressed from all perspectives about the need for trust, confidence and being heard.

The Review has, in the light of this, focused on considering, understanding and respecting how the perspectives of children and young people, parents, carers and professionals either differ or coincide and why.

Themes that have been dominant and consistent across all the perspectives (children and young people, parents and carers and professionals) have been noted and analysed. There were different views on origins and solutions. Where there are fundamental differences, these have been clarified.

Against this background, the report does not highlight or showcase either poor or excellent practice. Instead, the report seeks to draw out themes from this evidence and make recommendations that will drive changes in implementation in practice.

The themes of the narrative are interlinked and interconnected. There were significant underpinning issues, which have become so embedded and assumed that they are difficult to see. These were identified, highlighted and analysed.

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Three broader frameworks of thinking about public services have also been referenced where relevant:

- Implementation and Improvement Methodology;[12]

- Early Intervention and Prevention;[13] and
- Kindness in Public Services.[14]

Firstly, however, it is essential to ground what follows in this report in the experiences of children and young people.

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[12] https://pureportal.strath.ac.uk/en/publications/implementation-science-international-encyclopedia-of-the-social-a

[13] https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/

[14] https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/kindness-emotions-and-human-relationships-the-blind-spot-in-public-policy/

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What did children and young people tell the Review[15]

Children and young people want to be included in their schools and communities. They feel it is important that those working in schools are aware of additional support needs and sensitive to their individual needs. Schools should have a whole school approach to inclusion, respect children and young people's rights and support individuals to achieve their potential. This will be of benefit to all children and young people and can be achieved by talking with and listening to them. Children and young people told the Review that these things are important:

- **Meaningful relationships between children and young people and staff are important for learning;**
- **A willingness to adapt** teaching methods to children and young people's learning styles, needs, and varying pace and challenge, helps them to learn. Using technology can be really helpful here;
- **School needs to be a safe place.** Having a choice of calm, quiet or sensory areas' in all schools would help facilitate this. Children and young people should be able to choose when they want or need to access these spaces;
- **All school staff need to have more knowledge and**

understanding of additional support needs so they can meet everyone's needs;
- **Children and young people with additional support needs don't want to be underestimated for their ability and capability.** Their additional support need should not define them;
- **More understanding and empathy from peers** would improve their learning experience;
- **Timely responses to bullying** were important for children and young people;
- **Support for children and young people with additional support needs must be consistent.** It should be available whenever people need it and all staff should make sure they support a child or young person in the same way. At present there are multiple examples of neither happening;
- **Communication needs to improve.** Primary and secondary schools need to talk to each other. There also needs to be more communication between schools, other organisations that provide support, and children and young people;
- **Children and young people need to feel they have involvement in information sharing** as part of decision making. Children and young

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[15] Many thanks to the Young Inclusion Ambassadors for providing the headlines for this section.

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people have their own views on what works for them and what kind of support they need; and

- **Additional Support for Learning needs to be adequately funded** to ensure everyone gets the support they need, when they need it.

Parental testimony and specialist organisations provided many examples of children and young people's views and experiences that reiterate and affirm these key points. A smaller number of contributions than hoped for were made directly by children and young people themselves with the support of their schools or other organisations. This highlights the need to strengthen support and structures for listening to their views and also reflects the conclusions on visibility and awareness noted under Theme 1: Vision and Visibility.

For this reason, my first recommendation is:

Overarching Recommendation: Children and Young People Participation

Children and young people must be listened to and involved in all decision making relating to additional support for learning. Co-creation and collaboration with children, young people and their families will support more coherent, inclusive and all-encompassing policy making, which improves implementation, impact and experience.

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Review findings and how to read this report

Introduction

The sections which follow, are divided into themes.

One of the main challenges of this Review process has been to excavate and disentangle these themes. They are at the root of why not all children and young people are flourishing as the legislation intended.

These themes have become embedded, assumed and are often hidden. The headline conclusions under these themes are shaped directly by the Review's priority focus on those involved in direct implementation: children and young people, parents and carers, school and other professionals at the frontline of delivery. The intention is to maintain focus on the impact of each of these themes in practice.

The overarching experience they shared with the Review is characterised by:

1. A significant disconnect between experience and the stated aspirations of the legislation and policy.

2. Challenges in being able to respond to the needs of children and young people with additional support needs. It is dominating the focus and the time of many school leadership teams and specialist service managers, but this is not consistently or sufficiently recognised and understood at senior management and planning levels.

3. Not all children, young people and the professionals who are committed to supporting them to flourish, are valued at an equal level within the education system. This is strongly reinforced by the pressures of the focus on Attainment.

4. Children and young people and the parents, carers and professionals working closest to them all express frustration at not being listened to by people within the system who they perceive to have the power to act or make changes.

5. A range of other strategic and operational factors are influencing, and are symptomatic of, the disconnect between the aspiration and objectives of the legislation and the reality of implementation.

Shaping this report into themes is an endeavour to unpick and examine these factors, but it must be emphasised that they are interlinked and enmeshed.

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It is understandable that readers of this report will focus on the themes that appear to be of most relevance to their involvement and experience. However, the Chair would urge all who have an interest in this issue to read all the themes, as they are so interconnected.

The landscape is complex and will continue to be so. The unique opportunity this Review presents is to make that complexity visible, to establish an agreed baseline for positive action and to prioritise and energise a critical area of public life.

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Theme 1: Vision and visibility

A Comprehensive Picture?

There is a lack of understanding, or recognition, of the range of issues and conditions which entitle children and young people to support. This is amongst even those closest to the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation.

The Review considered reasons for that. This report also focuses on common and shared themes and processes rather than on differences or comparisons. This is in line with the key principles of the legislation, which do not distinguish or prioritise between children and young people.

However, the Review has received significant contributions on behalf of the children and young people affected by some of the issues and conditions listed above. It has actively sought to engage with the groups of children and young people who do not have the same profile or strength of group advocacy within additional support for learning.

It is important to incorporate and highlight the key issues of concern for all groups the Review heard from. It is equally important to acknowledge that some voices are weaker or may still be missing.

Annex C presents this information.

This report is the base for a live working document, which should be developed and become part of a continuing communication and awareness raising strategy, noted in the recommendations.

On this theme, it has been reported that there are variations in reporting of needs. While there are broad consistent trends over time in the pupil census data[16], there are factors that contribute to this variation across the country. These include local authorities and schools responding differently to thresholds and moderation issues as the national definition of 'Additional Support Need' allows for wide interpretation.

There are also variations in administrative and technical recording processes for SEEMiS[17][18] (who does what will vary across schools), and in how SEEMiS data is used at a local level, i.e. its purpose beyond the census of needs.

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[16] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/Summarystatsforschools
[17] The Education Management Information System
[18] Local Authorities have different approaches to provision of support provided at each stage.

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What is Success?

Scotland does not have a national vision of success for children and young people within the overarching concept of "Learning for Life"; the language of the legislation.

Underpinned by the rights conferred by this legislation the term "Learning for Life" resonates with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 28 and 29, which defines learning as:

"The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" [19]

Article 28 (b) notes:

"Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational…"

This is a broad and holistic definition of education, which encompasses a broad and holistic vision of learning.

However, the additional support for learning legislation primarily designates responsibility for its implementation to Education Authorities, limiting the focus of attention and understanding of additional support for learning on education and academic achievement and on the education system.

Under the legislation, Education Authorities can draw on support from other agencies identified in the Act: Health, Social Work and Skills Development Scotland. In that regard the Getting it Right for Every Child[20] (GIRFEC) framework should underpin a holistic vision of children and young people as pupils, as learners in the broader sense and also as individual young citizens, part of their wider community.

The evidence from professionals, parents and carers is that GIRFEC is not consistently driving implementation of the additional support for learning legislation. GIRFEC too often becomes focused on the **process** of planning, due to restrictions on the capacity to deliver support.

Yet evidence to the Review, particularly on transitions, consistently affirms that a wider view, rooted in the concept of learning for life beyond the educational and academic, is crucial.

That wider view needs to encompass the child or young person's lived experience, 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Their whole life outside the edges of school life into home, family (however, family is

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[19] https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/
[20] https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/

constituted or is defined by a child or young person[21]) and community.

The wider view on learning is vital both during the journey **through** the education system from nursery to college and **after** that into adulthood. Everyone's childhood experiences affect their lifelong wellbeing and life chances. However, a comprehensive perspective on learning has particular significance for children and young people with lifelong conditions.

Recognising and Measuring Achievement

The most powerful and visible measure of success for Scotland's education system and for the progress of individual children and young people is currently attainment in the form of qualifications. Within the system, some qualifications are valued significantly more highly than others.

All review contributors have affirmed that there must be no reduction in aspiration or ambition for children and young people to flourish and achieve to the best of their abilities, not least in formal qualifications.

However, not all children and young people can make progress and achieve through qualifications.

Collated performance indicators for the education system currently overlook other forms of progress made by many children and young people.

This devalues and demoralises children and young people who learn and achieve in other ways and devalues and demoralises the skilled and committed staff who work with them.

Children and young people for whom exam based qualifications are not aligned to their learning needs and potential are not failures. The Review evidence is consistent that there must be recognition of individual achievement in Learning for Life. This means creating **equally valued** alternative pathways and ways of measuring individual progress. These must measure the child or young person's achievements and success from their own starting point. At the same time, the skills of professionals supporting those achievements must be made visible and recognised as valuable.

At system level, this picture is reflected in the focus of political dialogue and media attention on exam results and the absence of public celebration of other pathways and achievements.

The limited needs focused language of additional support for

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[21] The term "family "will be used throughout the rest of the report encompassing this definition.

learning legislation reinforces the focus on a child or young person's additional support needs as deficits. The embedded implication is of (continuing) cost and burden rather than potential contribution. It overlooks individual interests, ambitions, aspirations and talents as well as love and connection in relationships with family and friends.

The language of deficit reinforces the experience children and young people have of being seen and reacted to as the embodiment of their condition or their problem. Appreciation of how that condition or problem affects them, and feels for them as individuals, is lacking in this approach. This is further stigmatising and excluding. It causes hurt and loneliness for children and young people.

In this context, it is welcome therefore that the First Minister has recently stated:[22]

"Scotland is redefining what it means to be a successful nation by focusing on the broader wellbeing of the population as well as the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the country…

…Putting wellbeing at the heart of our approach means we can focus on a wider set of measures which reflect on things like the health and happiness of citizens as well as economic wealth to create a world that considers the quality of a person's life to be as precious an asset as financial success."

Additionally, in relation to another area of policy, the First Minister has said:

"…the system of help, decision-making, support and accountability - must be more supportive and responsive."[23]

These are helpful and timely statements of commitment that resonate with the case for a new approach to recognising, understanding, appreciating and celebrating progress for all children and young people.

The narrow view of learning, the dominant focus on qualifications and the embedded perspective on deficits all underpin the lack of visibility of children and young people in public and political debate on education and more broadly as equal members of our communities and society.

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[22] https://www.gov.scot/news/health-and-wellbeing-as-fundamental-as-gdp/

[23] https://www.gov.scot/publications/statement-report-independent-care-review/

Recommendation 1.1 Vision statement

- A national, overarching Vision Statement for success for children and young people who have additional support needs must be developed by the end of 2020, with the full involvement of children and young people.

- This vision statement must be developed alongside a positive public communication plan that highlights the range of conditions and issues identified in the additional support for learning legislation. This will be one of the ways in which the profile of additional support for learning is raised to ensure equity for all children and young people.

- The achievements and successes of children and young people with additional support needs must be celebrated publicly, in equivalence to attainment and exam results.

- The language used to describe children and young people with additional support needs, and the services that support them, must be changed. It should move away from describing children and young people as their condition and should not be solely focused on deficits[24].

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[24] For example, Keys to Life is a positive reference point for consideration.

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Recommendation 1.2 Measurement

- A national measurement framework for additional support for learning must be developed to ensure that there is no reduction in aspiration and ambition for all children and young people to achieve to the maximum of their learning potential. The National Improvement Framework must be revised to ensure parity for additional support for learning.

- This framework must be rooted in improvement methodology and assist in reinforcing a culture of improvement rather than compliance. The main objective of measurement and recording will be to support local improvement rather than comparisons between Authorities.

- The test measures must recognise that qualifications are not relevant learning objectives for all children and young people and those children and young people are not failures because of that. The Milestones to Support Learners with Complex Additional Support Needs[25], introduced in 2018, along with the Curriculum review are positive reference points and should be taken into account.

- The measures must value and ensure visibility of the diverse range of achievements, including in vocational learning, that are possible for all children and young people with additional support needs and reflect what they and their families feel are important for their (future) quality of life.

- The investment in Pupil Support Assistants must be measured for impact and improvement on children and young people's experiences and achievements. Local authority and school managers must plan a strategy to review the deployment of Pupil Support Assistants, which takes account of recommendations from the current national research Education Endowment Fund (2018)[26].

- A plan must be developed and implemented to test how the National Performance Framework can be expanded to include achievement measures that go beyond the current narrow parameters of attainment and qualifications (based on the National Performance Framework values).

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[25] https://education.gov.scot/media/pcvpeaeg/milestones-supporting-learners-with-complex-asn.pdf

[26] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistants/?utm_source=site&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=support%20assistants

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Theme 2: Mainstreaming and inclusion

At political, policy and strategic levels the principles of Inclusion and of the Presumption of Mainstreaming[27] in education are widely and strongly supported.[28]

Inclusion – what does it mean in practice?

The Review has strongly and consistently affirmed that the physical presence of a child or young person who has additional support needs in a mainstream school does not constitute inclusion.

The four principles of the inclusion framework[29] state that for children and young people to be included at school, they must be **present, participating, supported and achieving**:

"Together, these four features support the delivery of inclusive learning environments for all children and young people that enable them to reach their full potential."[30]

Inclusion means the fullest involvement possible in the life of the school including outwith the classroom; in the playground, on school trips; at sporting and social events; visible as part of the community.

Inclusion encompasses the experience of a pattern of small and large informal and formal interactions and relationships, which combine to create the school community and culture. These things are hard to describe, but are felt by the children, young people and adults who are part of that community. Professionals, parents and carers all consistently commented on the "feel" of a school and the impact of a first visit on their ongoing perception of that school.

In that context, the true measure of inclusion is not through external and objective criteria, it is in the child or young person's own experience and how they feel. Currently, far too many children and young people report feeling isolated, lonely, rejected, sometimes actively disliked or uncared for.

Due to the predominant focus on attainment through qualification, the current emphasis across the Inclusion quadrants is unbalanced with the focus on achieving. A rebalancing across all four quadrants of the Inclusion

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[27] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/section/15

[28] Annex A

[29] https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-presumption-provide-education-mainstream-setting/

[30] https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-presumption-provide-education-mainstream-setting/

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Framework is required to support implementation of the additional support for learning legislation and is necessary to develop valued and alternative pathways that support the child or young person's experience of inclusion.

The Presumption of Mainstreaming – what does it mean in practice?

The Presumption of Mainstreaming was not part of the Review remit. However, the following perspectives emerged in the open listening process and have been included as part of the Chair's commitment to present a Review report which is credible to the contributors.

With 30.9% of children and young people now identified as having an additional support need, the key question that has emerged is:

What range of educational provision is required and how does it need to be shaped to ensure inclusion of all children and young people?

The concept of "mainstream" needs to be redefined and repositioned for the profile of children and young people as they are now and are projected to be in the future, not as they were in the past.

Nationally there are outstanding examples of mainstream education settings that have stretched and adapted their culture and environments to the benefit of all children and young people. Providing responsive personalised adjustments for individual children and young people matters for all, but is obviously vital to including those with additional support needs

There has also been the welcome development of nurture approaches across schools and local authorities[31]. Nurture is focussed on "wellbeing and relationships and a drive to support the growth and development of children and young people". This approach will be of particular benefit to some children and young people.

Where this approach can work particularly well is when it is used within enhanced provision within mainstream. In such settings, mainstream children and young people are supported on a needs led basis. Children and young people who attend the enhanced provision are all integrated within their mainstream setting. This also allows for relevant discussions to take place with other practitioners to inform planning and support. It encourages flexibility of the curriculum to develop core skills in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

Rural areas with dispersed populations and geographical distance challenges have always needed to stretch and develop that

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[31] An example of a nurture approach: https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/18943/Nurture

approach. Not having capacity to create separate mainstream and specialist provision has advantages when looked at through the lens of inclusion.

However, there are increasing levels of need. This is evident in how children and young people demonstrate their needs though communication and behaviour as well as in levels of diagnosis. There is also increasing complexity of need. Mainstream and, where relevant, special schools units and hubs, report being stretched and under intense pressure as the thresholds between Mainstream and Specialist are now significantly different.

This is particularly so where, not just the numbers, but the range of additional support needs in a classroom require very different responses.

There have been strong concerns expressed that decisions to place in specialist or independent provision too often require a child or young person to fail (sometimes repeatedly) rather than being driven by prevention and early intervention. This causes stress and distress for them, their families, school staff and others involved in direct delivery.

At the beginning of the Review process, the Chair heard the assumption expressed that primary schools are more able to be inclusive and responsive to additional support needs. Whilst

the stability of one teacher for a class has been confirmed as often having significant benefits, the Review finding is that primary education is now experiencing the same pressures as secondary.

One consequence of that is how effective the systems and processes are for transition between primary and secondary, a crucial point in any child's education. There are very well considered examples of excellent practice. However, the Review found significant variation with consequent impacts on children and young people and also on staff who were unprepared for the needs of children and young people.

Overall, the Review evidence on the presumption of mainstreaming raises questions for all aspects of design and delivery in education, including for Scotland's curriculum. Whilst the curriculum is designed to enable differentiation in order to most effectively support children and young people to learn, in practice many teachers expressed a range of concerns about how this is operating in practice and their skills and capacity to effectively provide curriculum differentiation.

As children and young people progress through the mainstream system, the consequences of that become particularly significant for children and young people with additional support needs. The intensity and funnelling of focus

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on qualification achievement in secondary and senior phase reduces the flexibility and capacity for response to support additional needs and support for learning through alternative pathways.

The Review heard a strong view in favour of responsive child centred provision. This requires a system that has flexible and permeable edges. It must be rooted in the ethos of inclusion, rather than constraining and defining children and young people by building locations and a hard edge separation between "mainstream" and "specialist". A minority, but notable opinion was that whilst specialist provision is in place, inclusion would never be achieved because that structure reinforces the view held by those professionals in mainstream provision that additional support for learning is not, or should not, be part of their responsibility.

Another argument made for flexible provision is based on the view that individual and group needs continuously change and develop through childhood and adolescence. Flexibility of edges would therefore (where decision making processes are aligned) enable professionals at, and closest to, the frontline of delivery, to exercise judgement on the complexities of group dynamics and interactions of children and young people with differing barriers or conditions.

This links to a clear and emphatic message heard consistently from many practitioners and professionals. This message is about the key organisational conditions that they need to fulfil their professional ambitions to support all children and young people to learn to the best of their ability. Conditions that also allow for replication of good and best practice – regardless of whether the setting is designated mainstream or specialist.

Supported by implementation methodology[32] those key conditions consistently identified and evidenced in the good practice seen by the Review are:

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[32] E.g. https://implementationscience.uconn.edu/ Implementation science is the study of methods to promote the integration of research findings and evidence into the practice and policy of education and research. The goal of implementation science research is to understand professionals' behaviour related to the uptake, adoption, and implementation of evidence-based interventions.

Key processes for implementation of Additional Support for Learning – how are they working to support inclusion and the presumption of mainstreaming?

The purpose of the legislation and subsequent amendments[33] was to widen access and ensure all eligible children and young people had their rights to learn upheld.

The Additional support for learning: statutory guidance 2017[34] identifies the Core processes required to achieve that including:

- Noticing/Identifying;
- Responding; and
- Coordinating/Monitoring.

The underpinning ethos is early identification to enable early intervention and prevention.

However, the evidence from respondents is that these key processes have become distorted to manage levels of need and demand.

The legislation makes no distinction between or prioritisation of the barriers faced by children and young people.

However, the guidance on the presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting[35] requires decisions on placing for each eligible child to be taken within two parameters:

- The requirement to consider the child's needs in balance with the needs of the group of children; and
- The requirement to consider Best Value for the Local Authority.

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[33] Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004 (as amended)
[34] https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/
[35] https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-presumption-provide-education-mainstream-setting/

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These parameters will never be static and the context for individual decisions will always vary.

However, increasing levels of need, their complexity, severity, the nature of expression of needs and resource constraints are intensifying the processes that prioritise children and young people in order to ration limited resources. The consequences of the extended period and impact of austerity on public services are of serious concern.

Processes include the introduction of, or increase in, thresholds for the requirement for a diagnosis before a response is considered, although the needs for support are clearly evident.

Once a threshold has been reached, there is variation in transparency and visibility of resource allocation processes; to professionals and leadership teams, as well as to parents and carers.

For example, in how directly involved school leaders are in decisions on Pupil Support Assistant time allocation and placement decisions or whether these decisions are the sole responsibility of a senior level of management.

A very significant level of energy is being devoted to child planning processes. This complies with process targets[36], but does not necessarily result in active delivery of support. This causes disappointment, frustration and anger for children, young people, and their families and a sense of failure and helplessness for staff.

For committed staff, endeavouring to maintain their professional integrity, the key delivery conditions already noted, are essential. Where openness and transparency are not in place, the risks are of a culture of blame and/or a culture that lacks robust accountability for practice with vulnerable children and young people.

These are significant issues, which are extremely uncomfortable to raise. They must be aired and considered. Not to ascribe fault or blame, but to assist in understanding the fundamental problems that this Review has been established to consider.

One of the consequences of prioritisation and rationing of resources, is that inevitably it results in competition between individual children and young people. It does the same in terms of advocacy bodies for groups of children and young people who fit eligible categories and conditions under the legislation.

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[36] Timescales as set out under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004 (as amended)

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There is open agreement across all perspectives that the children and young people who are most likely to be prioritised for resource are those whose parents and carers are able and willing to strongly and persistently advocate on their behalf. These parents and carers often expressed concern for the children and young people whose parents are not in a position to advocate for them.

It was clear that those children and young people whose parents and carers are less able or unable to advocate for them, are clustered in particular groups which are recognised under the Additional Support for Learning Act. Even so, as a result of lacking that individual advocacy, they are routinely overlooked.

In reflecting on these points, it has been notable that professionals, when asked what they would do if they had a child with additional support needs, have consistently responded in the same language as parents and carers: "I would fight for my child"

Despite this, the range of comments from professionals about parents and carers included a strong view – and expectation - that parents and carers are "unreasonable and demanding". This fuels the difficulties in communication and relationships highlighted under a later Theme.

This Review provides an opportunity to propose a reframing of the issue.

Children and young people who are most likely to get the wider support needed to flourish, have the support of strong advocacy of their families. This is a symptom, not the cause of the problem that not all children and young people are flourishing.

Scotland's overall policy on families[37] affirms that the aspiration should be for all parents and carers to be the best advocates for their children. This is, however, not a prerequisite for needs to be met. Public services are expected to be and should be proactive and responsive.
The other factors highlighted in this report clearly mean that is currently not the case.

Alongside the strength of parent and carer advocacy, the other significant factor, which prioritises identification and response in providing support, is in how the child or young person communicates through their behaviour. This is an equally sensitive, uncomfortable, but essential area which needs airing.

As noted, the legislation requires consideration of the child or young person's needs within the group of children's needs. Evidence heard by the Review is that the personal

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[37] https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-together-scotlands-national-action-plan-parental-involvementparental-engagement/pages/5/

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and professional values of professionals are significant factors influencing that judgement and that there is a diversity of views on inclusion as a principle.

It is essential to stress that the resource constraints already referred to are the context for these comments.

Where children and young people communicate distress through behaviour, which impacts on them, on other children and young people, and on adults, there must be support to alleviate that distress. However, the principle of early intervention points to the need for support in creating a culture of anticipation and prevention. Evidence from children and young people provided to this Review, and consistently through similar listening exercises, focuses on relationships and trust as crucial in achieving that – the development of those need time.

Where professionals differ, is on whether that support and response should be within or outwith the classroom setting. Different perspectives will support inclusion or reinforce exclusion – including through informal or formal exclusion from school. These points link closely to those made under the theme on relationships and behaviour.

Respondents have highlighted that children who have an additional support need which does not impact on others are overlooked. Focusing resource on the children and young people who are most visible is often attributed to resource constraints.

Again, it must be emphasised that this is a symptom of the current difficulties, not an underpinning cause.

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Recommendation 2.1 Integration of additional support for learning into the Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence

- The Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence must fully integrate the findings of this Review and focus on all children and young people, affording equity to those with additional support needs.

- To fully achieve this, the Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence must maintain a strong and central focus on the experience of all children, young people, parents and carers and the professionals in closest connection with them.

Recommendation 2.2.

- The work of the Scottish Education Council must be informed by the findings of this Review.

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Theme 3: Maintaining focus, but overcoming fragmentation

Significant breadth of knowledge and experience is needed to effectively deliver the key processes of additional support for learning implementation, including identifying, responding, and coordinating/monitoring. This is due to the wide range of issues and conditions identified in the legislation and already referred to here.

There has been a strength of concern expressed to the Review about the loss of specialist expertise and practice experience through reductions and changes in career pathways as well as due to resource pressures. This loss of expertise, and of respected champions and advocates for additional support for learning within the system, has further reinforced diminishing visibility and value at strategic levels.

Equally, the risk of focusing on additional support for learning as a specialism has been evident in reinforcing views where non-additional support for learning professionals believe additional support for learning is for others to deal with – not them.

This has been one of the areas in which evidence to the Review from practitioners has been striking in consistency of language.

The strength of this reinforces that an increased pace of movement to an overall universal baseline of inclusive practice, in terms of values, culture and mind-set as well as delivery models, is essential.

This trajectory brings benefit and improvement in the learning experience of all children and young people and to building confidence in all professionals.

However, over-reliance on inclusion without specialism in a climate of overall low visibility of additional support for learning at all levels has risks. For example, young people have expressed concern that some schools now view their focus on LGBTI young people (which they fully support) as constituting their inclusion agenda. This reinforced the experience some children and young people have of being overlooked and low priority.

Another strong theme emerging is that generalised concepts of inclusion and the broader GIRFEC framework have not driven inclusive practice for children and young people. Instead, they have led to a diluting of focus and understanding of significant barriers to learning and obscured the need for focused expertise.

This reinforces the case made for flexible child and young person centred provision. There needs to be the earliest possible access to any tailored and specialist support needed. This must be underpinned

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by an inclusive culture of values and principles in which children and young people feel safe, happy and accepted as the grounding for their learning.

Evidence to the Review confirms that both perspectives are required and do not need to be in conflict. Universal inclusion and specialist focus are both essential features in order to ensure Additional Support for Learning has priority and parity of visibility. That needs to be evident at policy development as well as delivery levels, so that Additional Support for Learning is an embedded, proactive consideration in any developments in education or children, young people and families' policy rather than an afterthought.

In practice, any review and repositioning of the edges and relationships between inclusion and specialism, requires a strategic approach to practitioner knowledge and skill development, as considerable caution was expressed by practitioners about the risks of focusing on some conditions to the exclusion of others.

Recommendation 3.1 Leadership and Strategic Planning

- There must be clear values-driven leadership, shared communication, support and challenge at all levels of the system to ensure that the experiences and achievements of children and young people with additional support needs are visible and continue to be improved.

- In order to drive a holistic approach and support the visibility of children and young people with additional support needs, local authority planning must incorporate the implications of additional support for learning for all local authority and partner services.

Recommendation 3.2 Fully integrated policy making

- Children and young people with additional support needs must be proactively and fully considered in policy making and appropriate cross-Government links made at the earliest stage.

- Children and young people, parents and carers must be partners in the development of key policies and guidance across the system.

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Theme 4: Resources

The remit of this Review specifies that the process should be confined to consideration of implementation within existing resources.

The location of those resources is not specified. However, as noted under [Theme 1](#), whilst education authorities have responsibilities for Additional Support for Learning implementation, appropriate agencies[38] are also included as partners in delivery.

Therefore, this section includes limited comment on resources as justified within the parameters, timescale and capacity of the Review. The opportunity and the expertise required for legitimate analysis of the resource and financial dimension of Additional Support for Learning implementation lies with the Audit Scotland thematic review of Additional Support for Learning, planned to start by the end of 2020.

The impact of austerity and consequent poverty and inequality for families has necessarily been commented on throughout this report, as has the impact on public services and their capacity.

This is unavoidable in a context in which 30.9% of children and young people are identified as having an additional support need. The

points which have already been made in Theme 2 on Mainstreaming and Inclusion about prioritisation of need must be acknowledged.

The Additional Support for Learning Act came into force in 2005 - before the world financial crash. It could not have been possible at that time to forecast the current challenges of increased need and identification of need and reducing resources.

The current situation highlights the relevance and alignment of the principle and policy of early intervention and prevention. Preventing distress, supporting positive childhood experiences and enabling all children and young people to flourish and achieve their potential, is key. The principle and policy is also relevant to the concept of investing in public funds at the earliest point for best impact and to save expenditure later.

The challenge of shifting investment to prevent acute need and crisis and across the boundaries of public sector services is common to the whole public sector reform agenda beyond the focus on Additional Support for Learning.

However, consistent with earlier comments on visibility, this

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[38] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/section/23

Review found that the financial perspective is not sufficiently visible and recognised as a driver for change.

Expenditure on Additional Support for Learning comprises one of the areas of most unpredictable local authority spend associated with legal entitlements. However, senior figures in public sector finance confirmed that it tends to be overlooked at corporate level in local authorities due to the focus on the other very real challenges of providing adult and older people services.

This report has been deliberately titled "Support for Learning: All Our Children and All Their Potential" to reinforce that the right values, mind-set and culture are crucial to ensuring that whatever the level of resource, it must be invested in supporting inclusion, not reinforcing exclusion. That theme is repeated throughout the Review, for example in Theme 7, on Relationships and Behaviour.

A holistic approach to children and young people, which fully enables delivery of Learning for Life, has implications for all parts of local authority services. For example, in specialist health services, not just education. Early intervention, at its most effective, needs a framework of non-stigmatising easy access family support services – pre-school age and throughout.

These support services are distinct from and complementary to parenting programmes. They are often able to more successfully engage with families facing the most complex and embedded personal, social and family problems underpinned by poverty and inequality. Hence the value of support services at pre-school stage in addressing the problems described by many schools of children not being "school ready" in behaviours of eating, toileting and communicating.

These services are often provided by the Third Sector and the continuity and sustainability of these early intervention support services is essential.

The Review heard from many parents and carers whose children and young people need support outwith school hours. Restricted or withdrawn support, not just at school, but in the evening, at weekends and in school holidays, impacts on the child or young person's capacity to learn. It also has stressful knock on consequences for the whole family including other children and young people.

Many schools in areas of high deprivation have stretched their role and focus across the edges of public services in response to the impact of poverty and inequality on their children and young people. This can include practical help around food, clothing and family support.

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School staff perceived that access to other public services, especially in health and social work, was requiring significantly higher thresholds. They saw this as preventing access to the services children and young people need. There is a variation in professional views about this stretch beyond the edge of school, with the majority leaning to a view that it is not appropriate to schools and their professional role.

This perspective emphasises the necessity and value of the broad discussion proposed under Theme 2, Mainstreaming and Inclusion. Concepts around enhanced provision and nurture have the potential to join the edges of services in order to support the continuity and quality of relationships for children and young people.

There is currently a divide in perception and perspective between education and the other statutory agencies about edges of responsibilities and thresholds for involvement and action. There was an encouraging general agreement that communication could and should be better. These challenges in communication are not unique to the focus of this review. Good communication requires time, which is a resource under pressure.

There are multiple variations in how health and social care delivery structures incorporate or connect with children's' services, including education.

The Review found that those structures are not automatically driving significant differences in key working relationships between professionals and coordination of services. The differing organisational cultures between education, social work and health are more influential in this than organisational structures

Strong, values driven leadership at service management levels are significant in overcoming this. People need the skills and willingness to forge individual professional relationships, and the drive to "get things done" regardless of, or despite, the structures.

Values driven leadership has been consistently identified as a key condition for effective implementation throughout this Review. That includes when that leadership is exercised, visible and recognised at corporate levels as well as by those within the service.

Overdependence on strong individual leaders, if other key conditions are not robustly in place, will always create a risk when those leaders move on. That highlights the concern expressed by those who have a longer term involvement with Additional Support for Learning that experienced champions and

ambassadors have been lost over the past 5 years.

For many children and young people with health or disability conditions, support from health professionals and others, such as Educational Psychologists, is crucial. In order to optimise a shrinking resource, a common pattern has been to refocus professional time into capacity building and consultancy.

However, other factors must be taken into account for professionals who deliver their service largely through consultation. While recognising the principle of building capacity in those closest to supporting a child, the impact of this is limited when there is inadequate time and resource for school staff to fully participate and reflect on the benefits of consultation.

This has been consistently highlighted as problematic for the potential for early diagnosis and/or intervention and prevention, including in transition planning between primary and secondary education and for children and young people growing into adulthood.

There is, therefore, a continuing role for targeted assessment, intervention and analysis, which adds value to that which school-based staff are already doing, and further strengthens the impact of consultation.

The example of a refocus of expert capacity into consultation highlights the challenge of strategic and service review and improvement activity as a response to decreasing resources.

There is evidence of very positive continuous improvement and review processes supporting creative and innovative change and development. Headed up by respected leaders, clearly aligned to the key purpose of supporting all children and young people to learn and achieve, and implemented and embedded with their involvement, these processes are valued and supported by frontline staff.

Frontline staff report that where those factors are not evident, the impact of these processes can be stressful and demoralising. The processes are time consuming. If they are perceived to be without benefits to the experience of children and young people, or the professionals involved, they can exacerbate cultures of blame. This again reinforces comments already made about the context of implementation methodology and the key conditions identified as essential.

These same considerations apply to associated activities. For example, sharing and replicating good practice and ensuring impact of high quality and, in principle, well received theoretical and knowledge materials and frameworks. This is especially

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important where these are primarily available through online learning.

As "inputs" to practice development and learning, their full potential will not be realised without the conditions in place to support that. [39]

Grant Aided Special (GAS) Schools

The GAS schools are independent of local authorities and are funded by the Scottish Government. There are 7 GAS schools in Scotland that provide support to children and young people with complex or multiple additional support needs.

The Review heard that relationships between local authority and the GASS are variable and are affected by the tensions that arise when decisions to place a child or young person in a GASS have become subject to formal adversarial legal processes.

Resource constraints are the evident underpinning issue, but there are other perceptions and concerns, which affect working relationships.

Local authorities vary in their position on the principle of outsourcing and in their views on the quality of GASS provision and the value and additionality of their specialist focus.

There are also strong views on the validity of the central government grant, in principle and in practice.

The GASS have concerns that these perceptions are not based on an informed perspective. This is because they feel contact is mostly in regard to legal processes with little apparent interest or opportunity to develop mutual understanding and positive communication outwith those pressures.

There is also concern that GASS provision is only considered when a child or young person has experienced repeated failure in mainstream or specialist provision. This reduces the impact their specialist expertise can achieve in prevention.

These tensions are not easy to overcome, but the GASS are a resource within the current system, and that resource should be optimised for the benefit of children and young people. That requires a constructive dialogue focused on the needs of children and young people and a willingness by the GASS and the statutory sector to listen and understand the concerns and constraints of each in order to make improvements in process and in practice.

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[39] Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blase, K., Friedman, R.M., & Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature. National Implementation Research Network, University of South Florida.

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There are similar themes and issues for the National Centres (Scottish Sensory Centre, CALL Scotland and Enquire), which should also be involved in similar processes to support benefits to children and young people.

Recommendation 4.1 Audit Scotland

- Audit Scotland must use the key themes in this report and the associated findings from Audit Scotland's audit of educational outcomes to inform the scope of their national performance audit on outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs.

- This must include assessing spend on additional support for learning across services, its impact on attainment and outcomes for children and young people at all stages; highlighting good practice and gaps.

Recommendation 4.2 Role of Grant Aided Special Schools

- The Grant Aided Special Schools and three national centres must use the opportunities that arise from the commissioning strand of the Doran Review[40] to consider how their specialist expertise (including in prevention and de-escalation) can be developed to be complementary to statutory mainstream and specialist provision, in order to support improvement in the experiences and outcome of children and young people with additional support needs.

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[40] https://www.gov.scot/groups/nscg/

Theme 5: Workforce development and support

The Review findings and how to read this report section emphasised the need to retain the perspective that all the themes interact with and reinforce each other. That is particularly important in this section. The recommendations attached to this Theme **cannot, in isolation, drive the changes needed.**

Firstly, there is substantial evidence that where implementation of Additional Support for Learning works well, it is primarily due to the commitment and determination of individuals among teachers and school staff, senior school leadership teams and service managers. They drive delivery despite the barriers highlighted by the other themes and despite not all of the key conditions for implementation and delivery, already referred to under other themes, being in place.

Secondly, as emphasised under Theme 2 : Mainstreaming and Inclusion, the system must be fit for the profile of children and young people as they are now and are projected for the future, not as they were in the past.

Therefore, workforce planning must anticipate the values, skills and knowledge needed for the 30.9% children and young people in Scotland's schools with an additional support need. We need the whole workforce to expect to

be part of a system that supports the learning of all children and young people. The distribution of the 30.9% will be variable; - especially where factors associated with poverty and inequality provision underpin or exacerbate other conditions, but the whole system must have the capacity and the will to be fully inclusive.

Unfortunately, we cannot assume and take for granted that all individual professionals are signed up to the principles of inclusion and the presumption of mainstreaming. Evidence emerged in the course of this work, which raises the deeply uncomfortable fact that not all professionals are. Values and beliefs, culture and mind-set are fundamental and there is more work to do in this regard.

It is also true that some professionals who believe in the principles are disillusioned by not having seen those principles translate into practice in terms of the key conditions for implementation.

Others have shared their core belief that their role should only be to teach children and young people capable of learning within traditional academic standards.

The increased and increasing impact of poverty and inequality on children and young people with

social, emotional and behavioural needs and other barriers appears to be reinforcing these views, dividing children and young people with additional support needs into "deserving" and "undeserving". This is not compatible with the legislation, which entitles all eligible children and young people equally.

Children and young people, their families and peer professionals have all shared their experience or provided their perspective confirming that these attitudes are an aspect of the environment. It is uncomfortable and difficult. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged and addressed.

Again the combination of key conditions for implementation are the relevant framework for action around this, ensuring there is a sound basis and confidence for support and challenge when values are not evident in practice.

Teachers

The Review has heard from leaders of schools in affluent areas and in geographically isolated areas where the number of children and young people with an additional support need is small. However, the increased likelihood and increased complexity of conditions since the legislation was passed requires a school workforce everywhere who have the mind-set and practice skill base to respond confidently and positively. That is inclusive of teachers who may work intermittently with children and young people with additional support needs as well as those who spend their career with groups with differing conditions and needs.

Currently there is minimal requirement for focus on Additional Support for Learning as part of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). That is of particular concern for student teachers on the 9 month Post Graduate course. The Review heard from Probationary teachers in their first year of teaching whose only awareness of Additional Support for Learning had been a short input on legislation and who felt ill prepared in terms of knowledge, understanding and practice skills. This was particularly difficult if their mentor during their probationary year did not role model a commitment to the values of inclusion in practice.

That is not the only disconnect. This Review heard testimony that the challenges associated with Additional Support for Learning are dominating the time of many school leadership teams and service managers at the next level above. The loss of focused career progression pathways in Additional Support for Learning practice development and leadership have been highlighted as reinforcing the lack of parity for children and young people and practitioners within education.

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The Review has met with or received testimony about many teachers who are inspirational. Common characteristics are inclusive personal and professional values, which are evident in good communication, relationship and trust building skills.

Their leaders, peers, families and children and young people all recognise this as an essential grounding and underpinning critical success factor for children and young people to learn and flourish. Relationships and trust are consistently highlighted as the most essential grounding for practitioners working in all services that work with people, especially people who are vulnerable.

Yet currently in teacher education and ongoing development, these personal aptitudes are overlooked and assumed. Acknowledgement of the value of human connection in education, especially for children and young people who are frightened or distressed, equally requires acknowledgement of how being humane within the boundaries of a professional role impacts on practitioners.

Students, probationary and qualified teachers need safe and respectful opportunities to reflect on and understand how developing relationships of trust and genuine connection impacts on them personally and on professional identity.

Pupil Support Assistants

Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) are highly regarded for the key role they play in supporting children and young people. Contributors to the Review have expressed this very strongly.

However, the overall view from PSAs themselves is that they don't feel recognised or respected within the system for the role that they play. This was described, for example, both in terms of involvement in communications and remuneration. Also the evidence overall confirms that they appear to be the least supported and invested in, in relation to learning and development.

That investment is essential to ensure that their knowledge and skills equip them for the role that they play. However, the investment also needs to be in understanding and ensuring that their focus is best deployed for the child or young person.

The investment of £15 million in Pupil Support Assistants announced in 2019 establishes a vital opportunity to identify these factors, drawing on emerging research[41] and the practice experience of PSAs and Teachers.

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[41] SHARPLES, J., WEBSTER, R. AND BLATCHFORD, P. 2018. Maximising the impact of Teaching Assistants. Education Endowment Fund. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/maximising-the-impact-of-teaching-assistants/

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Two areas require a particular focus. Firstly, in regard to integration of the PSA role into communication and child planning structures. PSA staff often offer experience and understanding of a child or young person's experiences and triggers. This vital insight should be included in all required information policies and protocols in order to enhance early intervention and a consistent response. Secondly, to consider how and where one to one time can best help to support and integrate children and young people within the class and to provide individual support outwith the class including for safety of the child or young person or others.

In clarifying these areas of focus, there is also an opportunity to articulate the complementarity of the PSA role, and remit, and clear differences in responsibility to professional teaching and teachers. This can support confidence for all individuals across the school workforce and ensure there are no barriers to good working relationships.

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Recommendation 5.1 Teacher Education and Development

Teacher recruitment, selection, education and professional development and learning processes must align with the changed and changing profile of children and young people in Scotland, ensuring:

- All teachers hold and enact professional values of inclusion and inclusive practice and see this as a core part of their role[42]. (Codes of Conduct/Standards)

- All teachers understand what additional support needs are. They are clear about their role in supporting the identification of additional support needs and the need to adapt their teaching to ensure a meaningful learning experience for all their learners.

- All teacher education and development includes nationally specified practice and skills development in supporting learners with additional support needs, as a core element.

- Practice learning and development at local level must include where and how to access specialists' expertise and support.

- Communication, relationship building and positive mediation skills development are incorporated and embedded into teacher education and development, supported by coaching and mentoring opportunities.

- Parity of career progression, pathway structures and opportunities for specialist teachers of Additional Support for Learning:
  a) There should be a first teaching qualification in additional support needs available during Initial Teacher Education; and
  b) The career path proposal under consideration by the SNCT[43] to develop new career pathways[44] should have an additional strand for Additional Support for Learning.

- The focus and methods for teacher education and practice learning are directly informed and developed by the feedback of teachers.

- Innovative and partnership approaches to practice learning should be developed including delivery and participation of children, young people, parents and carers.

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[42] https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/standards-for-registration.aspx
[43] Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (https://www.snct.org.uk/)
[44] https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-panel-career-pathways-teachers-final-report/

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Recommendation 5.2 Pupil Support Assistants

- The Classroom Support Staff working group must, as part of their work, undertake a review of roles and remit of Pupil Support Assistants. This must include the development of clear specifications for how classroom teacher and pupil support assistant roles interact and complement each other. It must also consider standards of practice, learning pathways, career progression routes and remuneration.

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Theme 6: Relationships between Schools and Parents and Carers

Current policy and guidance affirms the importance of effective working relationships between parents, carers and schools.[45]

There are outstanding examples of exceptional leadership at school and local authority level. These are enabling development of honest and trusting relationships between schools and parents characterised by mutual listening and respect. This provides a solid base for sharing views and airing disagreement without conflict. This offers reassurance that ongoing support is focused on change and improvement, which is focused on the child or young person.

There is also some exceptionally skilful work being done by parents groups to develop and implement supportive approaches to improving relationships with schools.

However, the Review has heard from many parents and carers about their negative experiences of being disregarded, not listened to or blamed for their child's behaviour[46]. They express particular upset at feeling their child is not understood or cared about and is only seen as a problem.

Parents and carers have often emphasised feelings of initial frustration and increasing anger when they are not given information about school or education authority processes or about their or their child's rights.[47]

Overall, the themes raised by parents and carers and the language of fight and battle, summarised from many of the reports noted in the Desk Review, were reiterated in this Review process. Equally, the Review heard the language of parents' and carers' hopes and fears, anxiety and guilt when they felt they were not able to ensure their children were flourishing. Emerging strongly from behind the anger are parents and carers who love their children and want them to be safe, cared for and thrive, to the best of their ability. This is what all parents and carers want.

The most powerful question the Review asked parents and carers to consider was "If you have had a

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[45] https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-together-scotlands-national-action-plan-parental-involvement-parental-engagement/pages/5/

[46] In connection with this, many parents described mixed or negative experiences of parenting classes. Whilst many spoke of feeling it was a "price to be paid" for getting support for their child or young person, there was also acknowledgement by many of (some) value although not as a substitute for support for **their child or young person**

[47] Annex B

difficult time and then it got better what has made the difference".

The consistent response was that an individual professional has become involved – Pupil Support Assistant, Teacher, Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher, Speech and Language Therapist, someone who demonstrates they care about the child and is non-punitive about their condition and its consequences for learning. This is captured in the phrase: "They just get it". Parents and carers valued that these individuals listened to them and took them seriously, enabling trust to be developed. This allows for far more constructive conversations, even when there is no avoiding the difficulty of those conversations.

Not only that, it also made it less likely that matters would develop into adversarial, formal, stressful and costly processes. The agencies involved in delivery of information and advice, mediation and legal processes all emphasised that through positive communication many situations could have been resolved at a much earlier stage.

The Review also heard from many parents and carers who have had to leave employment because of a lack of support in school for their child's needs, resulting in repeated exclusion – whether formal or informal. Many of these parents expressed the view that if there was investment in supporting children and young people with additional support needs at school, this would be better for Scotland's public finances, both in terms of their own earning potential and the potential for their children to become more independent and less costly for public services in their adulthood. In that regard, there were many examples provided of small, inexpensive, reasonable adjustments that would have made a significant difference to how the child felt and was able to learn at school. Parents and carers were disappointed and frustrated that these were not put in place. They felt this was further evidence that schools do not see them as partners.

The Review heard from many teachers and school staff about the impact of being unable to respond due to resource constraints or of fundamental disagreements about the needs of a child. Parents and carers who feel powerless in the system, might be surprised to hear how powerless teachers and school staff often feel. There were many examples of practitioners feeling upset and stressed at being unable to source expertise and support. That sense of powerlessness included the significant number of parents and carers who contributed to the Review, who are themselves school staff or other public service professionals, with an insight into systems and processes. Despite those insights, these parents and carers reported having no greater success in

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developing positive communication and involvement in decisions about their children than those without that knowledge.

In the absence of proactively provided, accessible information, in a world of social media, parents and carers at the start of the process are often relying on support from more experienced parents and carers.

The peer support of parents and carers to each other and their information exchange is important and hugely valued. However, comparisons between individual children and young people are not always relevant and this can lead to misunderstandings about rights. Peer support is a valuable complement, but cannot be a substitute for an effective engagement strategy between schools, authorities, parents and carers

Once trust and communications breakdown, they are difficult to regain. There is evidence that beyond the level of individual relationships, a culture of negative expectation about parents and carers has developed as the norm in many schools. This fuels an expectation that all parents will be difficult or unreasonable, their views are not valid and that the best strategy is to restrict information to avoid unreasonable demands.

Improvements can be made despite the impact of austerity and the problematic resource pressures already referenced. At the heart of these improvements must be a willingness to listen and communicate.

In practice, this would mean schools and local authorities recognising the value of the knowledge parents and carers have of their child, at home as well as at school. Parents and carers are as expert in their own lives as children and young people are in theirs, and that should be valued and respected.

However, being listened to and taken seriously does not, and cannot mean, always having proposed solutions and responses agreed with and supported. As well as differences of view between parents, carers and professionals; parents, carers and children and young people will also disagree. For example, one to one support at school tends to be highly valued as a support by parents and carers. Meanwhile, it can be felt by children and young people as further marking them out and separating them from their peers, which may make them vulnerable to bullying.

Therefore, it is essential that all involved are fully informed about rights and responsibilities in order to develop and strengthen partnership approaches, focused on the best decisions and actions for the child or young person.

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Teacher and school staff are the experts in school life and that should be valued and respected.

However, school staff expertise, and teachers' professional identity, is not undermined by a willingness to be open, to listen and to acknowledge that a shared approach with parents and carers is best for the child or young person. This is of significant benefit where the best approach and response to a child or young person is not immediately evident.

Submissions to the Review have demonstrated the value of establishing open and trusting communication, of professionals enabling a vital continuing dialogue with parents, carers, children and young people about what's working and what's not. This is also important for constructive discussions about how to respond to a diagnosis or identification of a condition or barrier. It is not helpful for additional support need categorisations to lead to standardised responses, or interventions, or to reinforce an unhelpful perception that there is an intervention that will "fix" a problem. Rather, the approach requires a dialogue about personalised interpretation, understanding and considered judgements for the child or young person, as an individual.

Where there is trust and mutual respect, disagreement is possible and, at times, necessary. It does not automatically lead to the breakdown of trust and confidence and can, in fact, strengthen the relationship.

However, pressured the environment is, rude, dismissive or abusive behaviour is not acceptable from professionals or parents and carers. The Review heard examples of both.

There is considerable scope for the principles of mediation to be developed as a positive early process to support parent/carer/school partnerships, rather than as a belated crisis response, in the form of one of the mediation services funded as a requirement of the legislation. [48]

The Review heard from school staff that involvement of mediation is often seen as a sign of their individual failure. This view contradicts the evidence base for using mediation processes in public and private sectors alike.

This theme, and final point, highlight again how essential it is to have the key conditions in place for implementation.

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[48] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/contents

Recommendation 6.1 Relationships between schools and parents

- Schools and local authorities must work in partnership with parents and carers to develop, and deliver, ways of working together that support and promote positive relationships, communication and co-operation.

- This must include clear pathways on transitions for children and young people with additional support needs, in the context of learning for life, allowing parents, carers, children, young people and professionals to be informed and supported at key transition points.

- Parents and carers must be involved, as equal partners, in the development of key guidance, to contribute their knowledge and lived experience.

- Further investment is needed to strengthen support services for families; allowing these services, and the support that they provide, to become embedded.

- The benefits of the use of mediation must be widely promoted at a national, regional and local level and consideration should be given to how mediation can be developed, through professional learning, to support the workforce.

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Theme 7: Relationships and behaviour

Unmet needs and an inability to express intense, difficult feelings can result in a child or young person expressing these through verbal or physical aggression. This behaviour can be the consequence of a range of issues including, for example, tolerance levels for external stimulation or past or continuing traumatic experiences. The impact and reverberation of this on practitioners and professionals as well as children, young people, and their families must be acknowledged.

There must be support for staff to enable them to alleviate that distress by identifying, as early as possible, what the triggers are that lead to a child or young person communicating in this way, or what has happened in the child's circumstances that they are upset about. That support must enable anticipation, prevention and responses informed by an understanding of the child or young person in the context of a trusting relationship.[49]

The Review has heard from most perspectives that children and young people who communicate through distressed behaviour must be carefully and sensitively considered in the context of the whole span of the Review.

The overall evidence and analysis support the conclusion that the issues that have emerged around relationships and behaviour are the symptoms and consequence of all the intermeshed barriers to successful implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation outlined under each theme, for example:

- That the focus on relationships and behaviour is considered in the context of the child or young person's whole life and journey through education: learning for life.

Also, good relationships and communication with parents and carers, who will understand the finer nuances of their child's behaviour and are able to share their knowledge of situations that their child might find difficult, are invaluable.

This reinforces the conclusion that the theme of relationships and behaviour must be fully integrated into the actions that follow this Review – not separated into a separate policy or practice silo.

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[49] The key point of principle included in Included Engaged and Involved Part 2: A positive approach to preventing and managing school exclusion states " All behaviour is communication"

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The theme of resources has been commented on within the parameters of this Review, but resources are not a standalone issue. Previous comments under, the theme of [Mainstreaming and Inclusion](), propose that resource must be directed to actions that increase inclusion, not actions that further exclude and stigmatise children and young people.

This is essential, as the Review has evidenced that not all professionals hold the belief that behaviour should be understood as communication.

One aspect of that is where children and young people, who express their distress through their behaviour, are viewed as either more or less "deserving" of attention and support. This is most evident in children and young people who have social, emotional or behavioural needs related to their childhood experiences and family circumstances, and associated with poverty and inequality. As referred to previously, this group of children and young people is one whose parents are least able to advocate for them.

Therefore, a school's culture, ethos, values and team mind-set, evidenced in practice by the school's leadership, is critical in establishing the positive environment in which all children and young people feel included and can flourish. This underpinning is essential for a culture where children and young people are respected. Rights are a prominent reference point for promoting and encouraging positive communications, trust and relationships between staff, children and young people.

It is equally important that there is a culture of trust, positive relationships and respect between staff, across management hierarchies and between peers. This is the basis for providing support, both for skills development **and** for the impact of working with distressed children and young people.

Positive relationships have emerged as the underpinning factor for supporting children and young people.   Professionals must exercise their own personal qualities alongside their professional skills, within a culture and structure of support.

A culture of trust also enables challenge, which is essential where values are not evident in practice.

Positive school cultures develop where the [key conditions for implementation]() are in place:

These are the conditions that enable early intervention and prevention and are underpinned by relationships.

Evidence provided to this Review and consistently through similar

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listening exercises and research[50] focuses on relationships and trust as a crucial underpinning. Trust is essential to ensure that a 'behaviour management' approach isn't taken as the first response or approach to distressed behaviour. As much of the interaction as possible with children and young people should be preventative. Where adults have to respond to behaviour, this should be grounded in relationships and based on respect for the child and their rights.

This strongly resonates with the findings that early intervention and preventative approaches reduce the need to consider exclusion, physical intervention and seclusion as responses to distressed behaviour. Accepting, respectful approaches are more effective than those that are experienced as punishing and shaming by children and young people.

Separate reviews and initiatives[51] have and are considering the areas of seclusion, exclusion, restraint. For this Review, the evidence from those initiatives has been considered as well as the direct individual and representative contributions.[52]

The evidence heard by this Review has affirmed the themes, concerns and actions already highlighted by these other, more focused, initiatives. Most significantly:

- Physical Intervention;
- Seclusion;
- Restraint; and
- Exclusions.

Actions from this Review must inform the focus on these themes and concerns by the Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) and the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group (ASLIG).

Lastly, whilst it has not been a key focus for this Review, it should be noted that, the physical environments of many schools create significant difficulties for children and young people with particular conditions and increase the likelihood of distressed behaviour. Many of the improvements and solutions in physical environments would appear to be of benefit to all children and young people.

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[50]For example, the Independent Care Review

[51] https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20200219InLTrfromDFMtoConvenerre_PetitionPE1548.pdf

[52] In a small number of situations, testimony provided to the Review resulted in the Chair activating a safeguarding process.

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Recommendation 7.1 Relationships and Behaviour

- The remit of SAGRABIS must be reviewed, and widened, to bring it up to date and in line with emerging knowledge and recommended practices, including the findings of this Review.   The membership of the group must be reviewed in line with the refreshed remit.

- SAGRABIS should have a primary focus on relationships and behaviour, but also the ability to focus on wider additional support for learning issues, developing improvement priorities and ensuring those priorities are reflected at a national, local and regional level. In doing so, SAGRABIS must ensure they work closely with the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group.

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Theme 8: Understanding Rights

Children and young people, parents and carers and practitioners all need to be fully informed and supported to understand the implications of relevant rights based legislation, especially as the Scottish Government has committed to the legal incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[53].

The UNCRC is one of the core United Nations human rights treaties. It sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

The UNCRC was a landmark treaty, recognising the importance of childhood and the unique needs of children and young people across the globe. It is unique in setting out how adults and Governments must work together to make sure that all children and young people can enjoy all their rights.

The UK ratified the UNCRC in 1991, but it has still not been incorporated into domestic law, meaning that many of the protections contained within it are not accessible to children and young people in the UK. Currently, schools can choose how they approach recognising and taking action on children's rights. This means that practice can vary widely and young people can have very different experiences. The Review heard that the rights of children and young people were not always well-understood or consistently applied in practice in schools. Parents and carers often independently research rights and act on behalf of their children on the basis of their understanding, which may not be completely accurate.

Incorporating the rights of children and young people, as enshrined in the UNCRC, is fundamental to making children's rights real. The value to children, young people and families in Scotland is that children's rights will be built into law, policy and practice; so all children and young people can benefit from and exercise these rights in their daily lives, which will improve their outcomes and experiences.

Incorporating the UNCRC into domestic law in Scotland will also enable children and young people, and those acting on their behalf, to advance their rights in the Scottish courts. The Scottish Government has committed to incorporating the UNCRC into Scots law before the end of the current Parliamentary session of 2021.

The themes of inclusion, participation and understanding of rights have emerged very strongly

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[53] https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

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as areas that need strengthening to provide a robust rights based framework for implementation of Additional Support for Learning. The preparation for incorporation should direct and enable planning and action on this for children, young people, their families and professionals as soon as possible, without waiting for the incorporation process itself. Proactive engagement and communication is essential; awareness and understanding of rights must not rely, as at present, on individuals often needing to seek out sources of guidance.

That assumes a degree of awareness to start with, which must not be assumed. The Review heard that many children, young people and their families shared the experience of struggling to find the information they needed, including on children's rights.

Also, it is essential that rights and associated processes for the Additional Support Needs Jurisdiction of the Health and Education Chamber of the First Tier Tribunal (the Tribunal)[54] should be clear and understood and barriers to access removed. This will allow equality of access for all children and young people, not only those whose parents and carers are strong advocates for them (as commented on under the theme on mainstreaming and inclusion).

It should be noted that, through active consultation, the needs and preferences of the small number of children and young people who engage with the Tribunal, are evident in the detail of the architectural and interior design of the Tribunal offices[55], and the operational processes developed to reduce stress and distress.

However, whilst it must be an objective to ensure all children and young people access their rights, there must be caution in regarding an increase in numbers accessing the Tribunal as a sign of success.

The focus must remain on recognition of need and delivery of support at the earliest possible point, underpinned by positive relationships and communication between schools, local authorities, children and young people and their families. The breakdown of those relationships is the common feature of the trajectory into adversarial processes, which are distressing for all involved and draw on resources, which may be better applied to direct support to benefit children and young people.

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[54] https://www.healthandeducationchamber.scot/additional-support-needs/12

[55] https://www.healthandeducationchamber.scot/sites/default/files/publications/add/What%20Happens%20on%20the%206th%20floor.pdf

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Planning and planning entitlements

Good planning processes are crucially important to ensure that all children and young people receive the support and interventions they need at the right time, from the right people, with that support coordinated, rather than fragmented.

However, the Review has highlighted that good planning requires skills in engagement and communication, which cannot just be assumed of staff who have not had practice development support. As noted earlier in this report, a significant amount of time and effort is currently focused on producing plans, rather than on practice and real change.

The preparation of a plan must be understood for what it is. Not an outcome, but a useful record of discussion and decisions to provide the basis for reviewing the specific support necessary for a child or young person to thrive in their learning. It allows progress to be monitored and individuals or institutions to be held accountable.

Even where excellent processes have underpinned the completion of a plan, that is only the first step. It is in the subsequent cycle of actions, focused on the delivery of support, kept under continuous review and adaptation, that forms the purpose.

Planning and plans should be proportionate to complexity and purpose. Where children and young people can be supported, with minor adaptation and within normal classroom practice, the mind-set of plan implementation and review is important, but a plan will not add value.

For other children and young people, a detailed plan may be necessary. Currently, there are a range of planning formats and frameworks, including Child's Plan and Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSP). The range of plans available is in itself a source of confusion among parents, carers and professionals.

The Review has seen examples of how effective planning and communication, with clear expectations, can lead to positive and sustained outcomes for children and young people. However, the evidence that emerges from the Review is that planning processes, and the language around, them can be overly complicated, time consuming and bureaucratic. This increases the feeling that children, young people and their families have of being disassociated and excluded from the process, rather than being partners in it.

Some professionals have told the Review of the frustration and burden of time of navigating complicated and overlapping planning processes.

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Reiterating the theme of early intervention and prevention, the Review has heard strong testimony from parents and professionals that planning to meet the needs of children and young people should be done at the earliest possible opportunity, with clear guidance and expectations set.

Equally, for it to be meaningful and effective there must be regular and proactive review – when needed, not just when required by legislation. The process must include all those who are involved and play a role in supporting children and young people. Most importantly, children, young people and their families should be at the centre of these discussions and given the support they need to be fully involved and engaged in the process.

Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs)

A CSP is a plan that has rights and obligations associated with it, identified by the Additional Support for Learning legislation. Broadly, a CSP is intended to provide the framework for the co-ordination of support, between education and at least one other agency, for children and young people with multiple and complex needs.

The intent of the legislation is not for all children and young people with additional support needs to have a CSP. In fact, the criteria are very narrow. A key issue to consider is that the legislation sets out the conditions that must be met for a CSP to be put in place including that: the child or young person requires 'significant additional support' from the education authority and social work or another appropriate agency[56]. The impact of austerity on this support has already been noted in the section on resources so there is a risk of need being defined by support provided.

However, the Review evidence is that there is widespread misunderstanding by parents, carers and professionals too, about the purpose, relationship to other planning mechanisms, (usually the Childs Plan), eligibility, or legal entitlement /requirement for a CSP.

For many parents or carers, a CSP is viewed as a gateway to access support, when the support identified within a Childs Plan has not been delivered. Their original frustration and anxiety is then increased when hopes for a CSP are not met. This is fuelled by hope based on conflicting information and misunderstanding.

This issue has been widely raised publicly outwith this process and the Review heard the same

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[56] As per Section 23(2) of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004 (as amended)

themes in many stories: of details of parents' and carers' battles (as commonly described) to access CSPs.

There is guidance available that seeks to provide clarity on the entitlement to CSPs and provide parents and carers with information on their rights to request such a plan.[57] The evidence heard by the Review confirms that information must be proactively made available and be accessible and visible to all those who need it.   Doing so ensures there is a shared understanding about the entitlements and benefits to children and young people of a CSP. It also averts some of the unnecessary friction, stress and damage to relationships that occur when parents and carers believe their child is having an entitlement withheld.

The CSP is a statutory plan; the Child's Plan is not. Parents and carers, understandably, often take the view that a CSP is more effective and provides them more protection, as there is a definitive right of appeal attached.[58]

Children, young people and their families have the right to appeal decisions about entitlement or content of the CSP to the Tribunal. This appeal process can itself be lengthy and demanding.

Again, a CSP must be viewed as a tool for effective planning, rather than an outcome. The Review has heard the frustration of many families and professionals that the support and interventions agreed as part of the CSP have not been fully implemented or reviewed robustly. This again can lead to disappointment and weariness with the system, although there can be further appeal to the Tribunal.

In May 2019, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and announced that the Scottish Government will review the use of co-ordinated support plans. This is welcome and must be seen as a valuable opportunity to explore these complex issues in greater detail, informed by the broader context for CSPs presented in the themes and conclusions of this Review.

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[57] https://enquire.org.uk/3175/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/csps.pdf
[58] https://www.healthandeducationchamber.scot/additional-support-needs/53

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Recommendation 8.1 Rights

- The incorporation of UNCRC and its impacts on Additional Support for Learning legislation and processes, must be fully anticipated and planned for to ensure children's rights are embedded and effectively underpin the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation.

Recommendation 8.2 Coordinated Support Plan Review

- The planned review of Coordinated Support Plans (CPSs) must take the findings of this Review into account.
- Also, it must consider:
  a) planning mechanisms within a whole life perspective for children and young people with lifelong conditions, including transitions between and beyond education settings.
  b) clarifying the interaction between CSPs, child's plans and GIRFEC.
  c) the relationship between education and partners in health, social work and other agencies to identify where re-alignment is needed in the preparation and delivery of support.
  d) where improvements are needed in the availability and accessibility of information and guidance about planning and its processes for all parents, carers, children and young people.

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Theme 9: Assurance mechanism and inspection

The perspective of children, young people and their families has been emphasised throughout this report. Their input indicated that their views and feelings are not sufficiently listened to and taken into account at any level, from their own support planning to service changes.

Many frontline practitioners and service managers expressed similar frustrations in terms of being unable to influence service changes, which have significant impact on how they practice.

Also, the current limitations of measurement and tracking have been highlighted and noted with the recommendations.

The fundamental challenge that this Review was set up to examine, of closing the gap between policy intention and practice, requires assurance and scrutiny mechanisms to develop. They need to be the drivers of the visibility of, and improvement in, the learning achievements of all children and young people.

The recommendations on the areas highlighted below, will assist in the review and strengthening of education authority assurance processes and mechanisms in

support of an improvement mind-set, including a non-punitive culture of learning from mistakes and failures.

Similarly, there is an opportunity to develop inspection and scrutiny processes as strengthened drivers of the improvements in Additional Support for Learning, which this Review has highlighted as necessary.

In terms of inspection, the Review has received consistent feedback that How Good is Our School[59] (HGIOS) is a strong overall framework for understanding the key issues around Additional Support for Learning in the context of the four quadrants of the Inclusion Framework. However, in practice, the focus of HGIOS was felt too strongly to be on aspects of attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy.

The recently launched Milestones framework[60] has been positively referred to (with the provisos around limited impact unless implementation and embedding processes are in place). The framework is seen as having the potential to support the rebalancing of focus and understanding of success across all

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[59] https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/HGIOS4
[60] https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/milestones-to-support-learners-with-complex-additional-support-needs-literacy-and-english

four quadrants of the Inclusion Framework.

Practitioners also expressed a strong view about the importance of having inspectors who had experience and understanding of the ethos and practice of inclusion and Additional Support for Learning. This was seen to be a key issue in ensuring a balance of perspective across the four quadrants of the Inclusion Framework.

Education Scotland's wider practice development role is relevant, given the overlap between closing the attainment gap and needs and barriers to achievement due to additional support needs. It has been suggested that there is a need and opportunity for the Regional Improvement Collaboratives[61] (RICs) to incorporate additional support for learning into their agenda and that Education Scotland could strengthen, and support, impact and improvement through that mechanism.

Recommendation 9.1 Assurance mechanism

- Following this Review, there must be a mechanism put in place to allow progress against these recommendations to be reported and scrutinised. This should be developed in partnership with the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group. A progress report should be produced for Scottish Ministers and COSLA one year after the publication of this report and its recommendations.

- Local authorities must take account of the findings of this report to review and align their quality assurance processes. This must drive improvements in process, practice and outcomes at all levels in the system.

Recommendation 9.2 Education Scotland

- Education Scotland must take account of the findings of this report and take action to ensure that their scrutiny frameworks and inspection activities are in line with it.

- Education Scotland must use the findings of this Review and the conditions identified for good practice, to support and develop improvement in local authorities, regional improvement collaboratives and schools.

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[61] https://connect.scot/news/regional-improvement-collaboratives-what-are-they

Summary and Recommendations

Overview

There are many dedicated, skilled and inspiring professionals who care deeply about children and young people with additional support needs. They are doing everything they can to support them to flourish and fulfil their potential in a delivery environment which makes that extremely difficult. Their commitment, in the face of that, deserves recognition and appreciation.

However, the evidence that emerges from this Review affirms that Additional Support for Learning is not visible or equally valued within Scotland's Education system. Consequently, the implementation of Additional Support for Learning legislation is over-dependent on committed individuals, is fragmented, inconsistent and is not ensuring that all children and young people who need additional support are being supported to flourish and fulfil their potential.

There is no fundamental deficit in the principle and policy intention of the Additional Support for Learning legislation and the substantial guidance accompanying it. The challenge is in translating that intention into thousands of individual responses for individual children and young people facing different learning barriers in different family, home, community, nursery, school and college situations.

There has been a significant increase in the number of children and young people identified as having additional support needs, initially caused by a change in recording in 2010[62] and continuing to increase year on year to 2018.) The complexity of needs has also increased due to a range of factors that create barriers to learning[63].

These factors affect children and young people in **all** parts of their lives, not just during the time they are in education.

In that regard, there has been a significant increase in children and young people identified as having an additional support need due to social, emotional and behavioural issues coinciding with an increase in poverty and inequality.[64]

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[62] https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-schools-scotland-no-10-2019-edition/pages/10/

[63] https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190326In_report_on_Implementation_pf_ASL.pdf

[64] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus18

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At the same time, austerity has put significant pressure on resources in all parts of the public sector.

That combination, of significantly increased need and static or reduced resources, is clearly the most powerful driver in shaping the current reality of implementation.

At the time of writing this report, the most recent figures (2018) show that 30.9%[65] of children and young people in schools in Scotland have an additional support need. That statistic highlights that this cannot continue to be viewed as a minority area of interest, to be considered in a separate silo within the framework of Scottish Education.

Education authorities have lead implementation responsibility and yet the language of the legislation is Learning for Life. This encompasses a much wider perspective than education alone. However, that breadth of vision is not yet realised. Other agencies are not playing as full a role as intended by the legislation, not least due to increased thresholds for service access, due to austerity.

The negative impact of increased need and static or reduced resources is compounded in how Additional Support for Learning

works in practice by other strongly influential factors:

1. The dominance of attainment and qualification results as the measure for success in Scotland's Education system, and the focus on that in political discourse. This devalues and demoralises children and young people who learn and achieve in other ways, and it devalues and demoralises the staff who work with them.

2. There is evidence of very positive continuous improvement and review processes supporting creative and innovative change and development. Headed up by respected leaders, clearly aligned to the key purpose of supporting all children and young people to learn and achieve, and implemented and embedded with their involvement, these processes are valued and supported by frontline staff. However, frontline staff report that where those factors are not evident, the impact of these processes is stressful, demoralising, time consuming and without benefit to the experience of children and young people or the professionals involved.

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[65] https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-schools-scotland-no-10-2019-edition/pages/1/

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To again reiterate, the key conditions identified by frontline staff, which enable them to effectively fulfil their role in implementing the legislation, are:

- Values driven leadership
- An open and robust culture of communication, support and challenge underpinned by trust, respect and positive relationships
- Resource alignment, including time for communication and planning processes
- Methodology for delivery of knowledge learning and practice development, which incorporates time for coaching, mentoring, reflection and embedding into practice.

The evidence does not support the assumption that all individual professionals are signed up to the principles of inclusion and the presumption of mainstreaming. Some professionals, who believe in the principles, are disillusioned by not seeing delivery in practice. Others express a core belief that their role should only be to teach children and young people capable of learning within traditional academic standards.

The Review was consistently told by committed professionals at operational and senior leadership levels that Additional Support for Learning is viewed by many of their colleagues as "Somebody else's problem" and "not their responsibility".

Where this mind-set is dominant, children, young people and their families are not always treated with the respect and values that underpin the principles of inclusion and the presumption of mainstreaming.

These points reinforce the critical need for an underpinning leadership ethos, and delivery culture, of support and challenge. The crucial conditions for that are accountability, visibility, monitoring and measurement, which enable a mature and clear understanding of the challenges, however considerable these may be.

Visibility

At school and education authority levels, the challenges, in relation to additional support needs and provision, are consuming significant amounts of time and energy; too often as a result of intensive informal or formal adversarial processes. At a national, strategic policy level, the issue has not been visible in the way it needs to be, which reinforces the persistent lack of value we place on children and young people who have an additional support need.

At broader policy and political level, competition for recognition, due to resource constraints, is driving a focus on specific conditions or needs groups within Additional Support for Learning.

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Focus on individual children and young people, and on specific conditions, obscures the more fundamental question of what a child focused education (and other public service) system, with 30.9% of children and young people with an additional support need, looks like and the absolutely critical issue of the workforce needed for that landscape.

One review contributor notes (and this language was frequently heard): Inclusion is not a Department. Schools need to be ready for children and young people as they are, not as we think they should be…And there is a fantasy that someone out there can fix things….Sprinkle magic dust and make the challenges go away"

Currently, the visibility of individual children and young people, and their conditions, relies on the determined advocacy of parents and carers or representational groups. This reinforces the competition between children and young people, and conditions, for attention and resources.

Consequently, whole groupings[66] identified in the additional support for learning legislation are invisible and have been completely overlooked. Also, it is important to be aware that those children and young people who do not express their needs and feelings openly, suffer the same distress as those who are unable to contain them.

It is essential to stress that these comments are not criticisms. Children, young people, their families and committed members of the workforce already feel devalued. There is no value in increasing these feelings. The landscape described is symptomatic of the challenges to implementation – not the cause of the problems

The pressures in the system and the lack of visibility is also increasing stigma, exclusion and inequality within Additional Support for Learning. There is evidence of developing perceptions around children and young people who are viewed as either more or less "deserving" of attention and support. This is particularly noticeable in language around many of the children and young people with social, emotional or behavioural needs whose parents are perceived and described as "inadequate" or just "bad".

Key Processes

At operational level, these underpinning factors, which are combining to constrain or prevent effective implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation, are evident in the distortion of the very processes intended to widen access, through

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[66] See Annex C and Theme 2

early and increased identification, planning and decision making.

These processes are too often being deployed as mechanisms for prioritising need in order to ration scarce resources. A very common example is where a diagnosis is required in order to access support services. Another is where individual planning processes result in a plan – but not the support actions the plan identifies as necessary.

In regard to those planning processes, there is considerable disappointment and scepticism about how GIRFEC[67] is operating for children and young people with additional support needs. This adds to significant confusion and frustration amongst professionals and families about when Coordinated Support Plans should be initiated as part of legal entitlement.

That confusion and misunderstanding is exacerbated by a widespread lack of understanding of relevant rights.

Parents and Carers

Hundreds of parents and carers told their individual, but common story to the Review. The key features were:

- Hope and belief that a request for help to a public service would be responded to;

- frustration with lack of information and restricted communication;
- hurt and anger at being ignored or dismissed; and
- loss of confidence and trust.

This was as true of parents who are also professionals within education or other public services.

Hence, the language heard from hundreds of parents and carers by the Review of "fighting and battles."

Meanwhile, school staff feel under enormous pressure, often feeling unable to do the job they want. Some described feeling under siege and further devalued. At the same time, staff whose attitudes are not aligned to the principles and values of inclusion have their attitudes reinforced and justified.

Hence, the system level tensions become channelled into the reality of implementation for individual children and young people, their families and the staff closest to them.

It is not surprising that relationships become fraught and trust is lost on both sides – subsequently it is often hard to regain.

In summary, the key conditions for effective implementation of the legislation including resource alignment, active measurement for

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[67] https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/

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visibility and improvement, and aligned workforce development are not currently in place. These are the crucial processes identified by Implementation Methodology for developing and improving complex services in complex environments.

Equally relevant are the crucial elements of learning from the developing influence of the "Kindness Agenda" on Scotland's national public service policy development.

That work confirms that the barriers to successful implementation are organisational cultures of risk aversion, blame and a drive to hit targets, which are not meaningful for those with additional support needs.

Most significantly, the Kindness Agenda emphasises the importance of recognising and supporting positive relationships "Relational rather than Transactional"; meaning relationships first and processes second.

That is confirmed by so much of what the Review has heard and in the answers to the question "If things were difficult then got better what was it that changed?

Without exception responses were framed in the language of : "she/he listened" "she/he cared" " she/ he just gets it" That applies to professionals commenting on management and leadership as

well as children, young people, their families and staff who they have contact with.

Overall, the Review has found that there are disconnects and contradictions between what is stated as intention and expectation, the (mis)alignment of key processes at all levels of the system and the actual experience of children and young people, their families and those working most closely with them.

Recommendations

The following package of interlinked and co-dependent recommendations are not a quick fix. They need to challenge and cause discomfort but if the will is there, they are the starting point for creating a real grounding for the environment needed for all our children and young people to learn and flourish whatever their needs are.

Visible leadership to drive momentum for change and to maintain the visibility of children and young people who have additional support needs in public life is essential.

Equally important is the imperative that at all levels, those that lead the change stay grounded by continually testing the gap between intention and reality through listening to the people who are at the heart of implementation: Children and

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young people, parents and carers, school staff and professionals.

That feedback loop must be embedded to close the current gap between intention and reality in the implementation of the additional support for learning legislation, thus fully enabling the inclusion of all children and young people who face barriers to achieving their potential.

Where possible these recommendations have been developed in partnership with key stakeholders. In support of that, the Chair has engaged with the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group throughout this process.

Should these recommendations be accepted then the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group will support and oversee the progress made against them.

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Children and young people participation

> ## Overarching Recommendation: Children and Young People Participation
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> Children and young people must be listened to and involved in all decision making relating to additional support for learning. Co-creation and collaboration with children, young people and their families will support more coherent, inclusive and all-encompassing policy making, which improves implementation, impact and experience.

Theme 1: Vision and visibility

> ### Recommendation 1.1 Vision statement
>
> - A national, overarching Vision Statement for success for children and young people who have additional support needs must be developed by the end of 2020, with the full involvement of children and young people.
>
> - This vision statement must be developed alongside a positive public communication plan that highlights the range of conditions and issues identified in the additional support for learning legislation. This will be one of the ways in which the profile of additional support for learning is raised to ensure equity for all children and young people.
>
> - The achievements and successes of children and young people with additional support needs must be celebrated publicly, in equivalence to attainment and exam results.
>
> - The language used to describe children and young people with additional support needs, and the services that support them, must be changed. It should move away from describing children and young people as their condition and should not be solely focused on deficits[68].

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[68] For example, Keys to Life is a positive reference point for consideration.

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Recommendation 1.2 Measurement

- A national measurement framework for additional support for learning must be developed to ensure that there is no reduction in aspiration and ambition for all children and young people to achieve to the maximum of their learning potential. The National Improvement Framework must be revised to ensure parity for additional support for learning.

- This framework must be rooted in improvement methodology and assist in reinforcing a culture of improvement rather than compliance. The main objective of measurement and recording will be to support local improvement rather than comparisons between Authorities.

- The test measures must recognise that qualifications are not relevant learning objectives for all children and young people and those children and young people are not failures because of that. The Milestones to Support Learners with Complex Additional Support Needs[69], introduced in 2018, along with the Curriculum review are positive reference points and should be taken into account.

- The measures must value and ensure visibility of the diverse range of achievements, including in vocational learning, that are possible for all children and young people with additional support needs and reflect what they and their families feel are important for their (future) quality of life.

- The investment in Pupil Support Assistants must be measured for impact and improvement on children and young people's experiences and achievements. Local authority and school managers must plan a strategy to review the deployment of Pupil Support Assistants, which takes account of recommendations from the current national research Education Endowment Fund (2018)[70].

- A plan must be developed and implemented to test how the National Performance Framework can be expanded to include achievement measures that go beyond the current narrow parameters of attainment and qualifications (based on the National Performance Framework values).

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[69] https://education.gov.scot/media/pcvpeaeg/milestones-supporting-learners-with-complex-asn.pdf

[70] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistants/?utm_source=site&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=support%20assistants

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Theme 2: Mainstreaming and inclusion

Recommendation 2.1 Integration of additional support for learning into the Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence

- The Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence must fully integrate the findings of this Review and focus on all children, affording equity to those with additional support needs.

- To fully achieve this, the Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence must maintain a strong and central focus on the experience of all children, young people, parents and carers and the professionals in closest connection with them.

Recommendation 2.2. The Scottish Education Council

- The work of the Scottish Education Council must be informed by the findings of this Review.

Theme 3: Maintaining focus, but overcoming fragmentation

Recommendation 3.1 Leadership and Strategic Planning

- There must be clear values-driven leadership, shared communication, support and challenge at all levels of the system to ensure that the experiences and achievements of children and young people with additional support needs are visible and continue to be improved.

- In order to drive a holistic approach and support the visibility of children and young people with additional support needs, local authority planning must incorporate the implications of additional support for learning for all local authority and partner services.

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Recommendation 3.2 Fully integrated policy making

- Children and young people with additional support needs must be proactively and fully considered in policy making and appropriate cross-Government links made at the earliest stage.

- Children and young people, parents and carers must be partners in the development of key policies and guidance across the system.

Theme 4: Resources

Recommendation 4.1 Audit Scotland

- Audit Scotland must use the key themes in this report, and the associated findings from Audit Scotland's audit of educational outcomes, to inform the scope of their national performance audit on outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs.

- This must include assessing spend on additional support for learning across services, its impact on attainment and outcomes for children and young people at all stages; highlighting good practice and gaps.

Recommendation 4.2 Role of Grant Aided Special Schools

- The Grant Aided Special Schools and three national centres must use the opportunities that arise from the commissioning strand of the Doran Review[71] to consider how their specialist expertise (including in prevention and de-escalation) can be developed to be complementary to statutory mainstream and specialist provision, in order to support improvement in the experiences and outcome of children and young people with additional support needs.

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[71] https://www.gov.scot/groups/nscg/

Theme 5: Workforce Development and support

Recommendation 5.1 Teacher Education and Development

Teacher recruitment, selection, education and professional development and learning processes must align with the changed and changing profile of children and young people in Scotland, ensuring:

- All teachers hold and enact professional values of inclusion and inclusive practice and see this as a core part of their role[72]. (Codes of Conduct/Standards)

- All teachers understand what additional support needs are. They are clear about their role in supporting the identification of additional support needs and the need to adapt their teaching to ensure a meaningful learning experience for all their learners.

- All teacher education and development includes nationally specified practice and skills development in supporting learners with additional support needs, as a core element.

- Practice learning and development at local level must include where and how to access specialists' expertise and support.

- Communication, relationship building and positive mediation skills development are incorporated and embedded into teacher education and development, supported by coaching and mentoring opportunities.

- Parity of career progression, pathway structures and opportunities for specialist teachers of Additional Support for Learning:
    c) There should be a first teaching qualification in additional support needs available during Initial Teacher Education; and
    d) The career path proposal under consideration by the SNCT[73] to develop new career pathways[74] should have an additional strand for Additional Support for Learning.

- The focus and methods for teacher education and practice learning are directly informed and developed by the feedback of teachers.

- Innovative and partnership approaches to practice learning should be developed including delivery and participation of children, young people, parents and carers.

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[72] https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/standards-for-registration.aspx
[73] Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (https://www.snct.org.uk/)
[74] https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-panel-career-pathways-teachers-final-report/

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Recommendation 5.2 Pupil Support Assistants

- The Classroom Support Staff working group must, as part of their work, undertake a review of roles and remit of Pupil Support Assistants. This must include the development of clear specifications for how classroom teacher and pupil support assistant roles interact and complement each other. It must also consider standards of practice, learning pathways, career progression routes and remuneration.

Theme 6: Relationships between schools and parents

Recommendation 6.1 Relationships between schools and parents

- Schools and local authorities must work in partnership with parents and carers to develop, and deliver, ways of working together that support and promote positive relationships, communication and co-operation.

- This must include clear pathways on transitions for children and young people with additional support needs, in the context of learning for life, allowing parents, carers, children, young people and professionals to be informed and supported at key transition points.

- Parents and carers must be involved as equal partners in the development of key guidance, to contribute their knowledge and lived experience.

- Further investment is needed to strengthen support services for families; allowing these services, and the support that they provide, to be embedded.

- The benefits of the use of mediation must be widely promoted at a national, regional and local level and consideration should be given to how mediation can be developed through professional learning, to support the workforce.

Theme 7: Relationships and behaviour

> ### Recommendation 7.1 Relationships and Behaviour
>
> - The remit of the Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) must be reviewed and widened to bring it up to date and in line with emerging knowledge and recommended practices, including the findings of this Review. The membership of the group must be reviewed in line with the refreshed remit.
>
> - SAGRABIS should have a primary focus on relationships and behaviour, but also the ability to focus on wider additional support for learning issues, developing improvement priorities and ensuring those priorities are reflected at a national, local and regional level. In doing so, SAGRABIS must ensure they work closely with the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group.

Theme 8: Understanding Rights

> ### Recommendation 8.1 Rights
>
> - The incorporation of UNCRC, and its impact on Additional Support for Learning legislation and processes, must be fully anticipated and planned for to ensure children's rights are embedded and effectively underpin the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation.

> ### Recommendation 8.2 Coordinated Support Plan Review
>
> - The planned review of Coordinated Support Plans (CSPs) must take the findings of this Review into account.
> - Also, it must consider:
>   a) planning mechanisms within a whole life perspective for children and young people with lifelong conditions, including transitions between and beyond education settings;
>   b) clarifying the interaction between CSPs, child's plan and GIRFEC;
>   c) the relationship between education and partners in health, social work and other agencies to identify where re-alignment is needed in the preparation and delivery of support; and
>   d) Where improvements are needed in the availability and accessibility of information and guidance about planning, and its processes, for all parents, carers, children and young people.

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Theme 9: Assurance mechanism

Recommendation 9.1 Assurance mechanism

- Following this Review, there must be a mechanism put in place to allow progress against these recommendations to be reported and scrutinised. This should be developed in partnership with the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group. A progress report should be produced for Scottish Ministers and COSLA one year after the publication of this report and its recommendations.

- Local authorities must take account of the findings of this report to review and align their quality assurance processes. This must drive improvements in processes, practice and outcomes at all levels in the system.

Recommendation 9.2 Education Scotland

- Education Scotland must take account of the findings of this report and take action to ensure that their scrutiny frameworks, and inspection activities, are in line with it.

- Education Scotland must use the findings of this Review, and the conditions identified for good practice, to support and develop improvement in local authorities, regional improvement collaboratives and schools.

Desk review – phase one

Introduction

This desk review was completed in August 2019. Its purpose is to summarise the wide-ranging statistical and other currently available evidence to support the independently chaired review of implementation of additional support for learning, including where children learn. Based on the evidence available, the desk review seeks to identify both the strengths and barriers to implementation to inform potential next steps of the review.

Methodology

This desk review was produced by using qualitative and quantitative data on additional support for learning, from a variety of sources. This includes Scottish Government statistical publications and research reports, Scottish Parliament Committee papers, and reports published by third sector or other organisations. A full list of the evidence considered as part of this desk review is set out at Annex A.

The desk review has been structured in three sections, using both quantitative and qualitative information. The quantitative evidence is drawn from statistical sources and considers a range of evidence under four broad headings – pupil information, staffing, outcomes for learning and funding. The qualitative evidence considers broader evidence around the experiences of pupils with additional support needs.

The three sections are:

- Section 1, which sets out the quantitative information[75] on the number of children and young people with additional support needs recorded across Scotland, the type of support they receive, data on attendance and exclusions among children and young people with additional support needs, and their achievements, attainment and destinations. Information is also set out on the type of provision that is available for children and young people across Scotland and the time spent in mainstream classes. Information is also provided about those who support children and young people with additional support needs, including teacher and support staff. Finally, data on funding has also been included.

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[75] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/Summarystatsforschools

- Section 2 then considers the qualitative evidence, which has been drawn from a range of sources. This includes consultations and research reports commissioned by or carried out by the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament. Evidence gathered by Education Scotland on how well schools have performed against Quality Indicator 3.1 (Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion) as set out in the tool How Good is Our School? Evidence has also been considered from a number of reports that have been published by third sector organisations.

- Section 3 presents a summary of the conclusions

Background

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 ("the Act") provides the legal framework for identifying and addressing the additional support needs of children and young people who face a barrier, or barriers, to learning. The framework is based on the idea of additional support needs.

This broad and inclusive term applies to children or young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, in the long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education and to be included fully in their learning. Children or young people may require additional support for a variety of reasons and may include those who:

- have motor or sensory impairments;
- have low birth weight;
- are being bullied;
- are children of parents in the Armed Forces;
- are particularly able or talented;
- have experienced a bereavement;
- are affected by imprisonment of a family member;
- are interrupted learners;
- have a learning disability;
- have barriers to learning as a result of a health need, such as foetal alcohol spectrum disorder;
- are looked after by a local authority or who have been adopted;
- have a learning difficulty, such as dyslexia;
- are living with parents who are abusing substances;
- are living with parents who have mental health problems;
- have English as an additional language;
- are not attending school regularly;
- have emotional or social difficulties;
- are on the child protection register;
- are refugees; or
- are young carers.

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- The above list is not exhaustive nor should it be assumed that inclusion in the list inevitably implies that additional support will be necessary. However, the Act automatically deems that all looked after children and young people have additional support needs unless the education authority determine that they do not require additional support in order to benefit from school education.[76]

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[76] https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/

Section 1: Information relating to ASN pupils in Scotland

The main quantitative findings at National level are:

Pupil Information

- In 2018, there were 693,251 pupils in Scotland's local authority primary, secondary and special schools and grant-aided schools.
- In 2018, there were 199,065 pupils reported as having additional support needs, representing 28.7 per cent of all school pupils (a 2.1 percentage point increase on last year). This proportion has increased in every year since 2007 when just 5.3 per cent of pupils were reported as having an additional support need). As a consequence, this increase is reflected in all analysis of data using this data set.
- A substantial proportion of these pupils are not on a formal support plan (co-ordinated support plan, Individualised Educational Programme, or Child's Plan) nor have a disability. Instead, they receive support under the 'other' category, a new type of need introduced in 2012. Support in this category is likely to be of short-term duration and not require learning targets.
- In 2018, there were 71,900 school pupils that who had a disability[77] or had a formal support plan (i.e. excluding those in the 'other' category). This represents 10.4 per cent of all school pupils, an increase of 0.9 percentage points on 2017.

Where children and young people learn

- In 2018, 190,027 pupils learned in **mainstream settings** for some or all of their time. This equates to 94.5% of pupils with additional support needs and 27.4% of all pupils. 6,823 pupils learned in **special schools**. This equates to 3.42% of pupils with additional support needs and 0.98% of all pupils. For some pupils a shared placement is in place, this means that they learn in more than one setting. The table below sets out information on the time children and young people spend learning within and outwith mainstream settings. Some children and young people learn within a unit which is attached to a mainstream school, or an enhanced standalone provision.

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[77] A pupil having a disability may not necessarily have an additional support need. The two terms are not interchangeable. An additional Support Need arises where there is a barrier to learning as a result of the circumstances of the pupil. A pupil may have a disability, which as a result of other measures may not cause a barrier to their learning. In 2018, 17,447 pupils were recorded as having a disability. Table 1.9
https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus18

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Total number of pupils with Additional Support Needs in 2018	199,065
Time spent by pupils in mainstream classes	
All the time in mainstream classes	185,791
¾ or more, but less than all time in mainstream classes	1,918
½ or more, but less than ¾ of the time in mainstream classes	1,114
¼ or more but less than ½ of the time in mainstream classes	436
Some time, but less than ¼ of the time in mainstream classes	768
No time in mainstream classes	9,038

- The number of pupils who learn in mainstream all or some of their time has increased by 55% between 2012 and 2018. At the same time, the number of pupils who learn in special schools has remained broadly static, with small fluctuations in numbers both increasing and decreasing over the same period.
- Table 1, Annex A provides the information to support this. However, it should be noted that it is not possible from the data to determine whether this increase represents a change in the needs of the population or a change in the way in which definitions are interpreted and applied in the context of local practice.
- Table 2, Annex A shows that the school estate in Scotland has contracted in size across primary, secondary and special schools across the period 2012-2018, whilst at the same time the pupil population is increasing. In the period 2017-2018, there has been a rise in the number of pupils with additional support needs attending special school provision.

Additional Support Needs – trends

- Table 3, Annex A shows that in the period 2012-2018 additional support needs arising from social and emotional behavioural difficulties has consistently been the largest group of children and young people receiving support in each year. In 2018, 44,680 pupils received additional support arising from social and emotional behavioural difficulties, representing almost 22% of the total number of pupils receiving additional support. Pupils receiving support for English as an Additional Language has been the fastest growing category of support rising by 129% from 15,148 to 34, 816 and representing 17% of the total pupils receiving support.

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- In percentage terms there have been significant increases in pupils receiving additional support as a result of; communication support needs (293% increase), young carers (636% increase), bereavement (300% increase), family issues (353% increase). These increases are welcome as they reflect a wider recognition of additional support needs within the framework of the legislation and recognise needs arising from circumstances beyond health and disability, which would have traditionally been the case.
- Whilst the young carers figures have increased significantly, the number of pupils identified as young carers is likely to be a underreporting of those who are young carers, due to the stigma and reluctance of young carers to identify themselves, or to be identified as a young carer.
- Similarly, the number of pupils receiving additional support needs as a result of being a care experienced pupil is significantly below the number of pupils who are recorded in national statistics on care experienced pupils. In 2018, 8,677 pupils received additional support. At the same time national statistics recorded that at 31 July 2018, there were an estimated 14,738 looked after children in Scotland[78] There is significant evidence on the attainment and achievements of looked after children and young people[79], and whilst this is improving, there is room for further improvement.
- There are a number of categories of support that have risen over the period 2012-2018 but do not reflect increases like those above. These include the number of pupils with additional support needs arising from dyslexia, autism, hearing and visual impairments, language or speech disorder, physical or motor impairment, more able pupils, substance misuse and pupils at risk of exclusion.   Only one category of additional support need has decreased over the 2012-2018 time period, learning disability. It is expected that this reflects an attempt to be more specific in the recording of the factors giving rise to the additional support need.

Staffing

- All school staff have a role to play in supporting pupils with additional support needs, as aligned to the standards for teacher registration. The number of teachers employed has increased over the period 2012-2018 with 51,138 teachers employed in 2018.
- Table 5 of Annex A shows that in 2018 there were 2864 teachers with a specific role related to the provision of additional support. These staff have reduced from 3390 in 2012, but the figure increased between 2017 and 2018. In addition, there were 14,547 staff with a role that supported pupils with additional support needs. This has increased from

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[78] https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2017-2018/pages/3/
[79] https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-scotlands-looked-children-2016-17/pages/8/

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12,992 in 2012, but there have been fluctuations within that time period.

Outcomes for Learners

- The percentage of school leavers with an ASN from mainstream secondary schools in an initial positive destination is consistently lower than for pupils without an ASN in the years 2012/13 to 2017/18. Table 7, Annex A shows that in 2017/18 89.3% school leavers, including Special School pupils, with additional support needs had a positive initial destination. A 4.9 percentage point increase since 2011/12.
- Pupils with an ASN arising from Dyslexia, Other Specific Learning Difficulty, Hearing Impairment, English as An Additional Language and More Able Pupils' all achieve beyond the national average of positive destinations for pupils with ASN[80].
- The percentage of ASN school leavers, by SCQF level attained is lower at all levels for non-ASN leavers. However, there have been improvements over time. 67.2% of 2017/18 school leavers, including Special School pupils, with additional support needs attained 1 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 or better. An increase of 12.0 percentage point increase since 2011/12.
- 88.0% of 2017/18 school leavers, including Special School pupils, with additional support needs attained 1 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 4 or better. An increase of 2.5 percentage point increase since 2011/12.
- Pupils who have additional support needs or English as an additional language tend to perform lower than other pupils, at all stages and in all organisers.[81] This is confirmed by Table 9, Annex A.
- In terms of attendance and absence, national attendance for all pupils is 94.1% whilst for pupils with additional support needs the national figure is 91.2%. Further detail on the breakdown of percentage attendance across settings is set out at Table 10, Annex A.
- In 2016/17, there were 18,381 exclusions from school of which 18,376 exclusions were temporary and 5 were removal from the register (sometimes called expulsion)[82]. The vast majority of exclusions were for 1-3 days duration. Further detail on exclusion for pupils with additional support needs is available at Table 11, Annex A,

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[80] Destination categories are broken down by Additional Support Need and presented within Table L3.1 of https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/leavedestla
[81] https://www.gov.scot/publications/achievement-curriculum-excellence-cfe-levels-2017-18/
[82] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/exclusiondatasets/exclusionsdataset2017

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- Local Government Financial Statistics for 2017-18 showed that local authorities spent £5.22 billion on education in Scotland. This has gone up from £5.07 billion in 2016-17, a 1.0% increase in real terms (3.0% in cash terms).
- Of that, £628 million was on additional support for learning, increasing from £610 million in 2016-17, a 0.9% increase in real terms (2.9% in cash terms).

Section 2: Summary of evidence

Included in the Main, Enable Scotland, March 2017:

https://www.enable.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/our-campaigns/included-in-the-main/

Background

In March 2017, Enable Scotland published the report – #IncludED in the Main?! This report followed their 'national conversation' about the experiences for young people in Scotland who have learning disabilities. The report presents findings from engagement with children and young people with a learning disability, parents and those who work in schools, in addition to a wider survey of young people across Scotland. The report includes 22 recommendations on how to achieve inclusion for children and young people with learning disabilities.

The evidence within the report was taken from three online surveys. 116 responses were received from children and young people aged from 5-26; 503 responses were received from parents of children aged between 2 – 28, from across 28 different local authority areas; and 204 responses were received from education staff working with children and young people with additional support needs. In addition, the report drew on findings from a survey of 1550 young people from secondary schools across Scotland.

Context

It should be noted at the outset that the survey does not, nor was it intended to provide, a representative reflection of all children and young people with learning disabilities in Scotland. The evidence base is relatively small. The responses from children and young people and parents combined equates to 4.5% of the total number of children and young people who are recorded as having a learning disability (ref) and represents 0.3% of the total number of children and young people with an additional support need.[83] The responses received from the education workforce represent around 0.3% of the total education workforce in Scotland.[84]   The age range of respondents should also be noted with some of those who responded falling outside the scope of additional support for learning implementation. It should be noted that the research could only base its findings on the experiences of those who chose to respond to the survey and while these experiences are very valuable, the conclusions presented within this report must be viewed within this context.

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[83] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus18
[84] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/teachcenssuppdata

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The timing of the report should also be considered when drawing conclusions. The report was published in March 2017, and a range of actions have been undertaken since then to address some of the recommendations made in the report – the most significant of which is the publication of the revised guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming.

The key findings from the survey were:

- Over 80% of the education workforce said we are not getting it right for every child through the presumption that all children should be taught in a mainstream setting
- 60% of young people who have learning disabilities told ENABLE Scotland they feel lonely at school, and 62.5% said: "people don't understand me at school."
- More than a quarter of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders told us they can't take part in games and sports with other people in their school. 23% told us they don't get to go on school trips. Nearly half (46%) said they don't get the same chances to take part in games in the playground as everyone else in their school.
- More than half (51%) of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders do not feel they are achieving their full potential at school.
- Nearly half (41%) of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders told us they did not get support to think about and plan their future when they finish school. 65% are worried about it
- 22% of parents and carers described their experience of the education system as positive; 50% described it as negative.
- When asked which words/phrases they would use to describe their experience of the school system so far the most commonly used words/phrases by parents and carers were: Stressful (77%), Battle (67%), lack of information (57%) and alone (44%).
- 98% of the education workforce feels that initial teacher training education does not adequately prepare teachers for teaching young people who have additional support for learning needs, including learning disability. 55% said it does not prepare teachers, while 43% said it could be better.
- Most education staff (78%), in particular class/subject teachers (86%), said: there are not enough additional support for learning staff in my school to support children and young people who have learning disabilities.
- More than half (52%) of children and young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders feel that they are not getting the right support at school.

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- 40% of (410) parents/carers said their child had been informally excluded from school, 19% said this was happening on a weekly basis.

The report made a number of recommendations to improve the experiences of children and young people accessing mainstream education. Some of these recommendations are broader than the scope of implementation of additional support for learning. In addition, some of the recommendations made have since been delivered on, particularly through the publication of the guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming.

The report recognises the legislative framework as "strong". However, notes that the "the evidence suggests that there is an urgent need for robust guidance, training, and systemic accountability". A key concern in the report is instances of children and young people not being fully included in their school community, whether that is not being allowed to participate fully in the wider life of the school or experiences of informal or unlawful exclusions. Given the strong inclusion focus of the guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming, it could be concluded that some of these concerns have been addressed in the period since this report was published. However, the experiences of reported informal exclusions are a separate issue. Difficulties arise in trying to quantify this information, as there is no statistical evidence available to support or challenge the evidence in the report. However, there is commonality between the evidence presented here and evidence from a range of other sources, most notably 'Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved'.

Another key concern within the report is the preparedness of the workforce to support the needs of children and young people in schools and particularly if those supporting children and young people feel they receive adequate training, both during ITE and as part of CLPD to allow them to fully support the needs of children and young people.   Again, this evidence is difficult to quantify as the sample size is small. However, the evidence presented as part of a number of other reports including, 'Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved' report and the EIS' report 'Exploring the Gap' raises similar concerns.

Another key area is the availability and visibility of information for families on sources of support or advice. Again, this evidence is difficult to quantify as the sample size is small. However, there is obvious correlation between the evidence presented here and those views expressed as part of other evidence considered, including the views within 'Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved' and the NPFS' survey on additional support for learning. The report notes "Families have identified 'having access to relevant information' (95%) and 'knowing where to go for support' (90%) as key coping strategies. However, many parents report that they do not have

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access to this." This is despite the availability and visibility of a dedicated national advice and information service – Enquire – which is funded by the SG and the legal requirement of education authorities to provide information on this service and other relevant services.

Conclusion

While the evidence within this report is qualitative, it is very valuable. There are a number of common themes between the evidence presented here and that which is available elsewhere within the scope of this review. The evidence within the report would indicate that there is a gap between policy and practice, particularly in relation to informal exclusions. The SG guidance on exclusions 'Included, Involved and Engaged part 2 was published following this publication of this report (June 2017). However, conclusions drawn from evidence which is dated after June 2017, could indicate that this guidance has not dissipated the concerns which were initially raised in this report about informal exclusions and that there remains a gap between policy and practice.

It is difficult to quantify the evidence presented within this report about parental experience of the system. However, there are commonalities between the experiences within this report and the experiences outlined as part of the evidence given by parents to Committee (ref) and in parental responses to the consultation on the guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming. It may be helpful to draw in data from Enquire about the number and type of enquires they have received to help quantify the evidence here. However, it may be that while there are suitable vehicles in place to provide information to parents, there needs to be consideration of how information and advice on additional support for learning is embedded within the system.

The small sample size makes it difficult to draw conclusions from the evidence about teacher training from this report alone. However, this theme is one that has also emerged from across a number of sources of evidence that may indicate that these concerns are felt across the system.

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How is Additional Support for Learning working in practice? Scottish Parliament Education Committee, May 2017:

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Reports/ASN_6th_Report_2017.pdf

Background

In March 2017, the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee undertook a short inquiry into Additional Support for Learning in Scotland's schools. The committee held a roundtable evidence session with the aim of hearing a range of views and opinions on this issue. The committee also spoke with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. As part of their inquiry, the Committee ran focus groups with teaching staff and university lecturers and members of the Committee visited a school to speak to teachers from two mainstream secondary schools about their experiences. The Committee also asked for written views to be submitted and it received responses from academics, organisations and parents and school staff.

Context

The Committee is made up of MSPs from across all political parties. During its consideration of school education, it decided to focus in on additional support for learning. The committee's inquiry and subsequent report is based on the views of those who responded to its call for evidence, those who were invited to participate in the evidence session, and those who were selected to be part of the focus groups. Of the 261 written submissions (ref) received, 143 were from parents and 64 were from teachers and support staff. The Committee's evidence session (ref) heard from 8 individuals or representatives, including parents, Enquire, school and local authority staff, an academic and the Scottish Children's Services Coalition. It is not clear from the report how many people altogether participated in the focus groups.   As the committee notes in its report, "it only heard from those who wanted to respond to its call for views, and so naturally comments centre around what needs to improve."   The evidence should be considered in this context and should not be taken as the collective view of those groups.

Key findings and recommendations

- A lack of resources on the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning policy means that the additional support needs of a large number of children are not being fully met, impacting on their education. In addition, this impacts on other pupils studying in mainstream education and on teaching and support staff, in the context of other work pressures.
- Nevertheless, the Committee is encouraged by the figures provided by the Cabinet Secretary on positive outcomes for those with additional

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support needs and to hear from a number of parents who wanted to tell us what a massive difference effective support from a particular person, school or education authority, in mainstream education, has made to the lives of their children.

- The process for establishing the need for support and the process of then receiving support, means parents have to fight for their child to receive support.

- Accessing appropriate support – the Committee welcomes the Scottish Governments review of the guidance on mainstreaming and recommends that the review includes a systematic assessment of each element of the process: recognition of an additional support need for a child, availability of support and receiving the correct placement. This should include assessing how resources are impacting on this – resource limitations that are impacting on these processes include:
  - The number of trained ASN teachers and ASN assistants
  - The availability of specialists including mental health specialists and educational psychologists
  - The level of resources supporting the ASN tribunal process and other appeal processes, and
  - The availability of spaces in special needs schools

- As supporting children with ASN is an important part of closing the attainment gap, the Committee recommends that the Scottish Government analyses the extent to which a process that relies largely on parental involvement to have their child's ASN recognised and supported, could potentially widen the gap.

- The Committee also recommends that the Scottish Government increases the provision of advocacy services and looks at how these could be best targeted at raising awareness and supporting parents from areas of deprivation.

- Due to the variation in education authority approach, the Committee is concerned that additional support needs are going unrecognised in some education authorities more than others and that the culture of the education authority, and some particular schools within education authorities, is also a factor. The Committee recommends that the findings of the Scottish Government working group, and information from the quality assurance review recommended above, should be used as a basis to explore with individual authorities any inexplicably low percentages of ASN in their area. The Committee asks that, when the Scottish Government has established which education authorities are a cause for concern, that the Government shares this information with the Committee so that the Committee can also seek to hold these authorities to account.

- The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government should undertake a financial review to find out the extent to which education authorities are spending in line with the level of need in their area. The

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Committee recommends that the Scottish Government undertakes this review in collaboration with education authorities and that it should be the basis of discussions with education authorities on future funding allocations.

- The Committee would welcome further investigation from the Scottish Government on how the education and ultimately the attainment of pupils in general is being impacted upon by insufficient resources being provided to support children with additional support needs.
- The Committee recommends that education authorities seek to collaborate more, including in designing and delivering training in order to avoid duplication of effort.
- In relation to teacher training, the Committee welcomes the undertaking from the Cabinet Secretary to highlight to the General Teaching Council for Scotland the Committee's concerns that combining post-graduate training with the probationary year will limit further the time available for new teachers to train in additional support needs.

The Committee's report is wide ranging and covers a variety of topics, which is perhaps reflective of the broad scope set out in its call for evidence. The report is supportive of the "inclusive ethos behind" the policy of the presumption of mainstreaming and notes that this was the view of the majority of those who provided their views. However, the report raises concerns about its implementation. Common with other evidence, it cites a reduction in resources as key barrier to successful implementation of inclusion and additional support for learning. The report comments that the "most notable factors are the reduction in the number of specialist staff in classrooms, the reduction in specialist support services and the reduction in special school places." Data available from the Scottish Government in discussed in section 1 above.

The Committee's report recognises that many children and young people with additional support needs are receiving the support that they need to achieve their potential and points to the statistical data available (ref) which shows that children and young people with additional support needs continue to go on to a positive destination following their school years. It also highlights some of the views expressed by parents about the positive impact effective support has made to their children. However, the report is concerned with the experiences of some parents who have described the challenges they have had to overcome to secure appropriate support and provision for their children. This is a common theme across other sources of evidence and some of the language used, for example "fight", "battle", "struggle" is shared. The Committee is concerned that the current position creates a situation whereby "children with informed parents, who press for recognition and support" are "receiving more support than other children".

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The report notes that some parents are unaware of their rights under the legislation and have to actively seek to find this information out.

The report also comments on the impact that a policy of inclusion has on the workload of teachers and the resulting impact on the learning of all children and young people at school. There are concerns presented in the report about the impact on pupils who do not have additional support needs, both in terms of their experience and their attainment. While it is not possible to draw any conclusions from the anecdotal evidence presented here about the experiences of all children and young people in Scotland, it is worth highlighting that the Scottish Government statistics show that the number of children and young people who have gone onto a positive destination has increased year-on-year from 2009-10[85]. This trend is similarly reflected for children with additional support needs.

The report notes concerns about training for teachers to allow them to appropriately support children and young people with additional support needs. Due to the nature of some of the evidence received, the report focuses on the training arrangements for a particular local authority. There was concern noted in the report about the arrangements for both ITE and CLPD with the report concluding that "issues undoubtedly exist with a reduction in specialist staff available in school to provide specialist training and the ability of school staff to take time out from other work pressures to train".

Conclusion

The Committee's report is wide-ranging and it makes a number of recommendations for improvement across the system. The inquiry heard evidence in early 2017, and it should be noted that there have been a range of developments since that time, including amendments to the legislation to extend rights to children; publication of a number of guidance documents, including guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming, a refreshed Code of Practice and guidance on school attendance and exclusions; and the development of enhanced resources for teachers and school staff.

It should also be noted that the Committee's findings are based on the experiences of those who responded to its request for their views and cannot be interpreted as representative of the experiences of all those in the system. However, there are a number of themes that emerge from this report that are common across a number of other sources of evidence. This includes general support for the principle of inclusion with a caveat that to

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[85] https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2019/02/summary-statistics-attainment-initial-leaver-destinations-1-2019-edition/documents/tables-charts/tables-charts/govscot%3Adocument

succeed this must be properly resourced; concerns from parents about their experiences of securing appropriate support and provision for their children; and concerns about the increase in the number of children and young people with additional support needs in parallel to a reduction in specialist staff, support and services.

Further scrutiny by Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee:

https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/103397.aspx

Background

The Committee looked again at additional support for learning in 2019. It initiated a call for evidence, held two evidence sessions and convened a focus group with parents, young people, school staff and others to "establish how their experiences and perspectives on the issues they raised with committee in 2017 had evolved." Evidence was collected during February and March 2019. Following this, the Committee wrote to the Cabinet Secretary in April 2019. A response was provided by the Cabinet Secretary in May 2019.

Context

As with the previous evidence gathered by the Committee, it should be noted that its conclusions are based on those who offered their views to the Committee and is therefore not necessary representative of the views of all those with experiences of additional support for learning.

Key findings/recommendations

The main themes of the Committee's re-examination of its 2017 inquiry are set out in their letter to the Cabinet Secretary of 9 April 2019.[86] These, taken directly from this letter, are noted below.

1. Mainstreaming and inclusion - policy intentions and policy in practice
   Sufficient resources are fundamental to the effective operation in practice of both the presumption to mainstream and additional support for learning policies. Indeed resources are fundamental to the educational experiences of children with additional support needs wherever they are educate. The Committee continues to be supportive of the intentions of these policies but continues to have real concerns about how they function with current resource levels.

2. Experiences of children and young people
   In light of the evidence received on seclusion and restraint, part time timetabling, unlawful exclusions and home schooling as a last resort, the Committee considers that the Scottish Government should consider ways of improving data gathering on these approaches be it through random sampling of schools or a wider approach.

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[86] https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190408Out_ltr_from_Conv_to_DFM_re_ASN.pdf

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3. Experiences of parents
   The Committee reiterates its analysis from 2017 on the need for increased awareness raising amongst and support for parents, including the recommendation that the Scottish Government should increase the provision of advocacy services and look at how these could be best targeted at raising awareness and supporting parents from area of deprivation.

4. Experiences of school staff
   As previously raised with you, in order to allow for a meaningful assessment of trends in staffing levels it is vital to have statistics that reflect the number of support staff with a specialism in supporting those with additional support needs. Work to standardise the nomenclature used by local authorities is a starting point for making progress in this area.

5. The role of local authorities
   The need for a financial review undertaken by the Scottish Government to ascertain the extent to which education authorities are spending in line with the level of need in their area, and identify any authorities that have spends lower than their recognition rates might require; and the need for improvements in the accuracy if data on the recording of incidence of ASN across local authorities including a breakdown by particular ASN, and an analysis of local authorities figures that reflect 'inexplicably low percentages.

6. Co-ordinated support plans
   The Committee considers that the depth of evidence received about issues with the implementation of CSPs and the associated impact, including to access the Tribunal, should become a stand-alone piece of work by the Scottish Government

7. Definition of additional support needs
   The Committee would welcome the Scottish Government's perspective on the suggestion from Professor Riddell that the definition of what constitutes an additional support need under existing legislation could be reviewed.

The themes presented as part of this evidence are consistent with those which formed part of its report in 2017, and the Committee continue to express concern in a number of areas as noted in the section above. The Committee also drew out from its evidence two new themes - CSPs and definition of additional support needs.

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The Committee's report notes that the use of the statutory co-ordinated support plan has declined and it expresses its concern as "access to many of the new rights depend on statutory support being in place." The statistics available on CSPs confirm that the number of children and young people who have a co-ordinated support plan has declined.[87] However, CSPs are one of a number of plans that can be used to support children in their learning. The purpose of a CSP is to enable support to be planned in co-ordinated way to meet the needs of children and young people who have complex or multiple needs that require significant support from education and another agency or agencies.[88]

Historically, the statistics show that the number of children and young people with a CSP have been small.[89] Under the legislation[90], there is a duty on education authorities to consider whether a children or young person who is care experienced, requires a CSP and there have been concerns raised previously about this issue.[91] In the response from the Cabinet Secretary[92], Mr Swinney stated that the SG would take forward a piece of work to review the use of co-ordinated support plans and will consider how to strengthen the guidance and other support available to education authorities on co-ordinated support plans. This could be informed by some of the work that is undertaken by this review.

It may be important to distinguish between the rights of children, which were extended in January 2018, and the CSP and the access that this provides to the Tribunal. As noted in the Cabinet Secretary's response to the Committee:

> "I note that the Committee has drawn a correlation between the number of co-ordinated support plans and the ability of parents, carers, young people and children being able to access Tribunals. I am aware that this may have arisen as a result of evidence provided. It may be helpful therefore, for me to set out the wide range of matters which can come before the Additional Support Needs Tribunal, to make clear that these include matters which are not related to a co-ordinated support plan. In addition to considering references relating to co-ordinated support plans the Additional Support Needs Tribunal also hears appeals about certain placing requests, disputes relating to transition planning, and matters of capacity."

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[87] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus
[88] https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190515In_ltr_froim_DFM_re_asn.pdf
[89] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus
[90] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/contents
[91] https://govanlc.blogspot.com/2015/05/glc-research-reveals-systemic-failure.html
[92] https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20190515In_ltr_froim_DFM_re_asn.pdf

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Further, the majority of rights of parents, carers, children and young people are not related to the co-ordinated support plan. This includes asking for their own or their child's additional support needs to be identified and planned for, receiving advice and information about their or their child's additional support needs; being part of discussions about the support that they or their child receive at school and accessing dispute resolution procedures to resolve concerns. The Scottish Government provides funding to 'Let's Talk ASN Scotland' and 'My Rights, My Say' to support families to exercise these rights under the Act."

In relation to the definition of additional support needs, the committee has set out that it has heard evidence to indicate that this definition has become too broad which has led to pressure on resources. There is little other evidence to support this position and it is not a theme that has emerged in other evidence. The response from the Cabinet Secretary indicates that the broad definition is "fundamental to the inclusive approach" and it would appear that there is no plans to make this change to the legislation.

Conclusion

The Committee's update to their 2017 inquiry is again wide-ranging and touches on a number of issues. Again, it must be noted that Committee's findings and recommendations are based on the evidence it received and gathered from a small sample of those with experiences of additional support for learning and the evidence it has drawn from other sources such as Not Included, Not Engaged Not Involved. However, a number of themes are again present in this evidence that can be seen in other evidence, particularly around resources and the experiences of children and young people and their parents of accessing appropriate provision and support.

The issue of CSPs is significant and has been recognised by both the Committee and the Scottish Government as requiring further work. While not expressly drawn out in other evidence, views of parents around their experience of the challenges their have faced in accessing appropriate support, and concerns about access to specialist support could be used to correlate this evidence and this link may be worth exploring in greater detail.

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Background

The Scottish Government ran a consultation on Excellence and Equity for all – guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming from 2 November 2017 to 9 February 2018. The consultation received 362 written responses - 87 from organisations and 275 from individuals.

Organisational responses came from the public, independent and third sectors and included local authorities, schools, national bodies, voluntary organisations, parent councils and unions amongst others. Individual respondents included parents, teachers, others working within the education sector and the public. However, identification of respondent type was only possible within a small proportion of responses, so an accurate breakdown of individuals' responses by respondent type is not possible.

Context

The consultation asked for views on the guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming. The guidance seeks "to ensure that local authorities have the guidance required to help their decision making in applying the presumption of mainstreaming and to improve inclusive practice in schools." The questions which made up the consultation were intended to draw out views related to the guidance document specifically and were therefore tailored for this purpose. However, the consultation attracted a wide range of views on inclusion and additional support for learning more broadly. This may have been influenced by the increased scrutiny on inclusion and additional support for learning, particularly in light of the Committee's inquiry and the publication of Included in the Main.

The sample size is relatively small and there is no information provided about the demographics of those who responded. In addition, as some of those who responded commented on the wider issues and some did not, it is not possible to conclude that the views expressed in the consultation are representative of the views and experiences across Scotland.

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The key findings of the consultation were:

- The majority of those who responded agreed with the vision for inclusive education in Scotland
- A large majority of those that responded agreed with the principles that are set out in the guidance.
- The majority of those who responded agreed that the expectations set out under each of the principles were the right ones.
- The majority of those that responded found the entitlements and options for provisions as set out in the document to be clear.
- The majority of respondents found the commentary and reflective questions helpful.
- There was a wide range of comments and opinions provided about concerns about the system more generally.
- There was a mixed view on the helpfulness of the case studies
- The majority of respondents said that they found the guidance helpful.

The majority of those who responded to the consultation agreed with the principles of inclusion. There was a clear distinction made by some between inclusion and mainstreaming and that children and young people should be included, regardless of what setting they attend. Those who did not agree with the principles of inclusion were made up of those who disagreed with the policy and those who felt it was not being implemented properly. Concerns were raised that "the current practice did not meet those aspirations and that if the guidance was to be implemented effectively, practice would have to be strengthened and supports put in place to achieve this." The analysis report notes that "the most common concern reported was resources and this included having sufficient numbers of teachers and support staff, access to specialist supports, specialist provision within local areas and the physical environment of the school". The report also notes that training is key to support the "attitudes and ethos of practitioners".

The responses highlighted the importance of collaborative relationships with partners, including health, social work and third sector organisations. There were also responses that suggested that it was essential that children and young people receive appropriate planning support, particularly at times of transition.

There were concerns raised by respondents about the availability and accessibility of information about the different types of placements that were available and an inconsistency of provision across local authorities. There were comments from respondents about the exemptions that can be applied in the presumption of mainstreaming legislation (ability and aptitude, incompatible with the efficient education of for other children and unreasonable public expenditure) and how these are applied in practice.

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Conclusion

The number of respondents to the consultation on the presumption of mainstreaming guidance is limited. In addition, the purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the suitability of the guidance document, rather than experiences of wider implementation issues and the consultation has been structured with this in mind. There are a number of organisations and individuals who responded only to the questions asked, while there are others who provided comments on additional support for learning and inclusion more broadly. It is therefore not possible to draw firm conclusions from this information.

However, there are a number of themes that are consistent with the picture presented elsewhere. As is evident elsewhere, there is broad consensus that the policy of inclusion is right. However, there are again concerns raised about its implementation. These focus on resources, training, parental involvement and relationships with other partners.

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Background

In 2018, the Scottish Government commissioned research to explore the experiences of additional support for learning for children and young people, their families and those who support them. The research took place in 18 schools in six local authority areas across Scotland. The schools were a mix of both primary and secondary schools; mainstream (with and without additional support needs bases or enhanced support) and special schools; and with varied geographies and levels of deprivation. It involved 100 face to face interviews with pupils ranging from P2 to S6. It also involved 54 school staff members (leadership teams, class teachers and support workers) and 39 parents. This research was published in March 2019.

Context

As with other sources considered as part of this evidence review, the conclusions presented as part of this research are not intended to be representative of the experiences of all children and young people with additional support needs, their families or those who support them. It does, however, provide a valuable insight into their experiences and views on certain things. The research was focused on 6 out of 32 local authorities, which were a mix of urban and rural areas. The number of those interviewed as part of this research was relatively small and they were selected by their school to take part. Of the 100 children and young people who took part in the research, 27 of them attended mainstream schools, 52 attended mainstream schools with enhanced provision or bases and 21 attended a special school. It should also be noted that the majority of those interviewed who attended a special school were located within urban areas. The research spoke to children with a broad range of additional support needs. The majority of those interviewed were boys.

Key findings

Additional support for learning provision

- All local authority officers involved in the research said their authority had a clear ethos around meeting the needs of children with ASN, which was in line with the presumption of mainstreaming.

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- Overall, most local authority officers felt that the balance of additional support for learning provision was improving in their area, becoming more flexible and individualised. However, most felt that there was still more to do to improve the balance of provision, including developing the resources available in mainstream schools, and being able to recruit skilled teachers and support staff. In some areas, there was a clear feeling from local authority officers and school staff that there were not enough resources to meet needs – particularly in mainstream schools.

School experiences of children and young people

- Many pupils at mainstream primary schools liked their friends and teachers. A few said they liked everything and would not change anything.
- Many secondary school pupils said that they liked the range of subjects and the support they received at school. However, some secondary school pupils said they did not like anything about their school at all. Some said they hated school and did not want to be there, and some said they did not like their teachers.
- Pupils at special schools said they liked playing outside, learning life skills, and topics such as sport, music and art. Many said that there was nothing they did not like, and their dislikes were very diverse and included noise, school work, friends, safety and not being allowed to be independent.
- Pupils at mainstream and special schools, generally felt positive about their experience, and were positive across SHANARRI indicators. However:
  - In terms of safety, some mainstream school pupils said that they felt – or had previously felt – very unsafe due to bullying. Half of all secondary school girls had experienced bullying, with two having moved schools due to bullying. A few pupils at special schools said that pupils were violent or aggressive towards them and wanted more help with feeling safe.
  - In terms of achieving, a few pupils at mainstream schools felt they could achieve better in small group or ASN base activity, rather than in the whole class. A few pupils at special schools said they were covering work they had already done and were ready to be more challenged.
  - In terms of inclusion, most pupils at mainstream schools felt they had lots of friends and that it was easy to make friends, and they were included in the life of the school. However, a few pupils in ASN bases in mainstream schools said they did not always feel involved in the life of the school beyond the base. Around half of pupils at special schools said they had lots of friends, but some (at two schools in particular) found it quite hard to make friends.

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- Overall, almost all pupils at mainstream schools and special schools felt their needs were well met.
- A few primary pupils said that they wanted more help, and a few didn't like going out of the class to get support as they felt they missed things. Secondary pupils often enjoyed going to a targeted support session and enjoyed the quiet space. However, two secondary pupils felt they did not get the help they needed.

Parental views on school experiences

- Parents and carers were broadly positive about their child's experience of school across all of the SHANARRI indicators. Overall, most parents felt that their child's school was doing well in terms of meeting the needs of their child. Parents and carers valued when communication with the school was good; enhanced support was available; and their children were comfortable at the school.
- Most parents of children at mainstream schools had something they would like to improve about the school – including some concerns about resources, staff and buildings and high staff turnover. A few secondary school parents had concerns about the busy school environment, the challenges ensuring all teachers had the information they needed about their child, and ongoing concerns about bullying.
- Parents with children at special schools liked the small size of the school and classes, the good ratio of adults to children and the access to physical space both indoors and outdoors. While a few felt their child was achieving more than at mainstream school, a few had concerns about academic challenge. A few on split placements felt that their child's needs were better met in the special school than the mainstream school.
- Almost all parents were very positive about the relationship and level of communication with teachers and support staff at their child's school. However, a few felt that they had to push to improve communication.
- For many parents it had taken a long time to get their child to the right environment. The challenges included a lack of understanding from staff in mainstream schools; experiences of bullying; long assessment and diagnosis periods; having to push for extra support or spaces at special schools or ASN units; and being moved between schools with little notice.

Involving young people and families in decision making

- Pupils at primary mainstream schools and special schools generally felt well listened to by teachers, and gave examples of being able to learn in a way that suited them.

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- While most pupils at mainstream secondary school did feel listened to, a few did not. A few felt that teachers didn't make the adjustments they needed.
- Almost all parents felt that they were involved in decision making relating to their child's education. However, some did not feel involved in choices about which school their child went to, or what support their child received at school.
- Almost all school staff felt that children were able to express their views and have these heard at school. Involvement was felt to work best if it was ongoing and genuine, with flexibility in engaging young people and parents, and meeting their needs.

Conclusion

While many of the children and young people who took part in the research had a number of positives things to say about their experiences, the research highlights that the experience of children and young people within their school communities is absolutely individual to them and positive or negative experiences can hinge on a range of factors and circumstances. This makes it difficult to quantify the views expressed by children and young people as part of this research.

The sample size is relatively small, however, there are a number of themes that emerge from this research which are common across a number of other sources of evidence. This includes a positive perception of the principle of the presumption of mainstreaming, but equally a recognition that appropriate resources are necessary to ensure successful implementation. There are some concerns expressed in the report by both parents and staff about there being a need for additional resource, particularly in mainstream settings, a view which frequently appears across a number of other sources of evidence.

Parents who took part in this research were broadly positive about the relationship and communication they had with their child's school although some parents expressed that they had had to "push" to improve communication. In addition, parents spoke about the challenges that they had experienced in securing the appropriate support and provision for their children and the length of time that this took. These views appear to be consistent with some views expressed by parents across a number of other sources of evidence who have described their experiences using language such as "fight", "battle", etc.

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https://childreninscotland.org.uk/not-included-not-engaged-not-involved-survey-finds-autistic-children-are-missing-out-on-education/

Background

In September 2018, Children in Scotland, Scottish Autism and the National Autistic Society, published a report about the experiences of children with autism missing education. The organisations carried out research with parents of autistic children who had missed school within the last two years. A total of 1,417 responses to the survey commissioned as part of the report were received. Responses were received from every local authority in Scotland, with the majority of responses from Glasgow and the fewest from Western Isles. Based on the evidence gathered as part of the survey, the report makes nine calls to action and several recommendations for further work.

Context

It should be noted at the outset that the survey does not, nor was it intended to provide, a representative reflection of all children and young people with autism in Scotland. The 1,417 responses represents 8% of the total number of children and young people with autism in 2018, and 0.7% of the total number of all children and young people with additional support needs.[93] The survey intends to offer insight into the experiences of families of children and young people with autism, and the barriers that they may experience in accessing education. The report provides a very valuable insight into these families' experiences. However, it should be noted that the findings are based on the experiences of those who chose to respond to the survey. The survey was advertised online for a period of three weeks in early 2018 and was promoted by each individual organisation, through their contact with individual parents and support groups. While the experiences of these families are incredibly valuable, the conclusions presented within this report must be viewed within this context.

The key findings from the survey were:

- 185 parents (13%) reported that their children had been formally excluded from school in the last two years.
- 478 parents (34%) reported that their child had been unlawfully excluded (ref) in the previous two years.
- 394 parents (28%) reported that their child had been placed on a part-time timetable in the last two years.

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[93] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus18

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- 1,004 parents (71%) reported that their child had missed school for reasons other than common childhood illness in the last two years.
- 50% of parents reported that their child had experienced more than one of these types of absence. 7% of parents reported that their children had experienced all four of the kinds of absence described in this report.
- Regardless of the type of absence, it was reported that 85% of children did not receive support to catch up on work they had missed.
- 72% of respondents reported that staff having a better understanding of how their child's autism affects them, including their communication needs, would have made a difference to their child. Other popular responses were: adequate support for their child at school (68%); adjustments for a child's sensory needs (57%); and other pupils having a better understanding of autism (56%).

The report recognises the Scottish Government's vision for education in Scotland and acknowledges the significant programme of work that is being undertaken to achieve this. The report notes that "Scotland's approach to policy and legislation is one of inclusion and equality". This would indicate that the evidence gathered as part of the survey did not include concerns about the policy approach or principles of inclusion or additional support for learning. However, it also notes that "these laudable principles are not reflected in the educational experiences of many autistic children."

The primary concern presented in the report is the exclusion of children and young people with autism, either formally or informally. The calls for action made in the report are focused on how these instances of exclusion can be prevented through a range of action both in day to day practice and at a more strategic level.

Further consideration – Scottish Government statistical perspective on exclusion

There is a correlation between the experiences set out in the report and the statistics available on exclusion from school among children and young people with additional support needs. The statistics show that in 2016/17, there were 11,352 instances where children and young people with additional support needs were temporarily excluded from school.94 This represents 62% of all instances of exclusions recorded in that period. This indicates that children and young people with additional support needs are five times more likely to be excluded than their peers. Within this, there is a lower exclusion rate of primary school children who spent all of their time in in mainstream classes (3.2%), compared with those children who spend some (8.6%) or all (6.8%) of their time within a special provision. In

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[94] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/exclusiondatasets/exclusionsdataset2017

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secondary, exclusions are highest amongst those children who spend some time in special classes and some time in mainstream classes (16%), compared to 10.4% in mainstream classes.[95]

Statistics indicate that the duration of the vast majority of all exclusions was between 1-2 days. [96] During the period of exclusion, the data indicates that for a significant majority, no educational provision was made. There are wide variations across local authorities in relation to the instances of children and young people being excluded.

One of the other main themes of the report is unlawful exclusion and the use of reduced timetables (ref). While the report recognises that the Scottish Government guidance[97] is clear on the law around exclusions and what constitutes an unlawful exclusion, its findings would indicate that there remain instances of "unlawful exclusions", including where parents are asked to collect children early from school, children are only attending for part days or exclusions are not formally recorded as such.

It is difficult to quantify the information presented in the report, as there is little statistical evidence available to either support or challenge it. The report notes that there is little guidance for schools and authorities on the use of part-time or reduced timetables. However, this conclusion appears to be at odds with the policy position and guidance on attendance and exclusions – Included, Engaged and Involved part one and part two, which makes clear the circumstances of appropriate use of part-time timetables.

The report narrates the impact that both these instances can have on children and young people themselves in addition to the wider impact on the family.   There is evidence elsewhere of the benefits of a flexible approach to supporting children and young people with additional support needs who face barriers, which could impact on their attendance. However, this report would indicate that these benefits must be carefully weighed against any potential barriers that such approaches may create.

The survey asked parents to indicate what they felt would make a difference for their child. The responses show a mixed picture of what measures parents felt could be taken to improve experiences for their children. This is not unexpected given the subjectiveness of the question and the clear premise that support should be tailored to the individual

[95] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/exclusiondatasets/exclusionsdataset2017
[96] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/exclusiondatasets/exclusionsdataset2017
[97] https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-2-positive-approach-preventing-managing-school/

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needs of children and young people. However, the responses suggest that parents feel there is a need to change both day to day practice and also the strategic approach of the school or education authority, both when deciding the most appropriate provision and also the approach and individual support to the child or young person.

Conclusion

The available SG statistical data would appear to support the evidence outlined in the report about formal exclusions. There is other similarly anecdotal evidence to support the findings the report makes in relation to unlawful exclusions and the use of part-time timetables. The evidence provided in this report would indicate that there is a conflict between practice and the Scottish Government policy position set out in the guidance on attendance and exclusions. However, the limitations of this evidence, as set out under the context heading must also be considered. Given these limitations, it is not possible to conclude if the experiences set out within this report are a true representation of the current position for children and young people with autism or additional support needs. However, it must also be noted that these experiences are not limited to this report and are present in a number of other pieces of evidence.

The evidence presented in the report related to a requirement for school staff to have a greater understanding and awareness about how autism affects children and young people and identifying the support that they require, is also demonstrated in other sources of evidence related to additional support needs more broadly.

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Education Scotland evidence from inspection

Background

Education Scotland is the national body in Scotland for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching. Part of their remit is to evaluate how well a school is performing in a range of key areas. To support this, inspectors use quality indicators from How good is our school? (4th edition). Inspectors use a six-point scale to evaluate how well a school is performing against these quality indicators.

Quality indicator 3.1 considers "the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements".[98]

In April 2018, in Scotland, there were 2,016 primary schools, 358 secondary schools and 126 special schools.[99] In addition, there are 2,544 early learning and childcare centres.[100] Each year, Education Scotland undertake inspections across all settings in Scotland.

All inspection reports are published on Education Scotland's website. During academic session 2017/18, 259 inspection reports were published following inspections undertaken in primary, secondary and special schools and early learning and childcare settings. In academic session 2018/19, 190 inspection reports have been published following inspections undertaken in primary, secondary and special schools and early learning and childcare settings. It should be noted that this is based on the inspection reports available up until up to 23 August 2019 with some inspections undertaken in 2018/19 academic year yet to be published.

Key findings

- Of the 106 primary schools inspected in 2017/18, 95 schools (90%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 11 schools (10%) were evaluated as weak.

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[98] https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/frameworks_selfevaluation/frwk2_nihedithgios/frwk2_hgios4.pdf
[99] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/schoolestatestats/schestate2018
[100] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/Pubs-Pre-SchoolEducation/ELCAdditionalTables2018

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- Of the 75 reports published relating to inspections in primary schools in 2018/19, 68 schools (91%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 7 schools (9%) were evaluated as weak.
- Of the 19 secondary schools inspected in 2017/18, 18 schools (95%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 1 school (5%) was evaluated as weak.
- Of the 19 reports published relating to inspections in secondary schools in 2018/19, 18 schools (95%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 1 school (5%) was evaluated as weak.
- Of the 11 special schools inspected in 2017/18, 10 schools (91%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 1 school (9%) was evaluated as weak.
- Of the 9 reports published relating to 2018/19, 7 schools (78%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 1 school (11%) was evaluated as weak and 1 school (11%) was evaluated as unsatisfactory.
- Of the 123 ELC settings inspected in 2017/18, 113 settings (92%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 10 settings (8%) were evaluated as weak.
- Of the 87 reports published relating to 2018/19, 80 settings (92%) were evaluated as excellent, very good, good or satisfactory against Q.I. 3.1; 6 settings (7%) were evaluated as weak and 1 setting (1%) was evaluated as unsatisfactory.

Conclusion

The evidence from inspections undertaken in 2017/18 and 2018/19 across primary, secondary and special schools and early years settings, shows that the vast majority of the schools and settings inspected performed well against Quality Indicator 3.1. The evidence shows a broadly consistent picture from 2017/18 to 2018-19. However, it is not possible to directly compare these findings. It should also be noted that the inspection evidence is a sample of all schools and early years settings in Scotland and this evidence is only drawn from those schools and settings which were inspected in that year.

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https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/education/ASN/ExploringTheGap.pdf

Background

In May 2019, the Education Institute of Scotland (EIS) published a report on additional support for learning. The purpose of this report was to "restate EIS support in principle for inclusion education; highlight current EIS concerns about the implementation of existing additional support for learning policy; restate our recommendations for enhancing ASL in Scotland." The report partly draws on responses to a survey of 12,250 members. The report considers what is working well within additional support for learning, what is not working well, the impact of this on both staff and pupils, and makes recommendations on how to address the concerns.

Context

When considering the report as evidence, it is important to be mindful of the wider context, not least the impact of the pay negotiations between the SG, local authorities and the unions which were concluded in April 2019. The survey gathered responses from over 12,250 of its members between 3rd December and 17th December 2018. This represents around 24% of the teacher workforce. In addition to the survey of its members, the EIS also undertook a survey of local authorities seeking to explore the variation in provision across Scotland.[101]

Key Findings

The report is broadly supportive of the principles of inclusive education. However, it comments that there is a "substantial gap between policy and practice." This view is one which is presented within other sources of evidence, including the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills' Committee report and it is evident in a proportion of responses to the consultation on the presumption of mainstreaming guidance and experiential research.

The report notes that "many children and young people are having their needs met in school" and recognises the range of strategies and approaches that are in place to support the "diversity of need in the classroom".   It also welcomes the developments around mental health which were announced in September 2018[102] and the investment in the training of educational

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[101] https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/education/ASN/ExecSummary.pdf
[102] https://www.gov.scot/news/delivering-for-today-investing-for-tomorrow-1/

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psychologists.[103] However, the report raises concerns about whether this is enough to reverse the "damage caused by many years of austerity".

The report cites lack of resource as the key barrier to implementation of additional support for learning. It draws on the responses received as part of its survey which concluded that "under-resourcing of ASL implementation was the third most pressing concern of members". This is a concern which is present in a number of other sources of evidence considered as part of this review.

The report summarises the "problems in ASL provision" into four broad categories:

1. Undervaluing

The report raises concerns about the undervaluing of specialism within the system. It draws on anecdotal evidence which suggests that ASN teaching staff are often used as short term cover which it notes impacts not only on the support provided to children and young people but also on the ability of those staff to further develop their skills. In addition, the report is concerned about the reduction in specialist units and the impact this has on children and young people who are unable to manage in mainstream provision and cautions against undervaluing the role of specialist provision. The report refers to SG published statistics noting that the number of special schools has fallen from 193 in 2008 to 114 in 2018, while the number of pupils in special schools remained largely the same. The statistics do record this drop, however, it should be noted that the statistics now only record special schools with at least one pupil, whereas prior to 2018, all special schools were recorded, regardless of whether it was providing education to children and therefore these figures do not provide a direct year-on-year comparison.

Further, the report notes that the role of ASN teachers and assistants has been undervalued and concluded that this is linked to a "societal undervaluing of work which is predominately carried out by women".

2. Under-investing

The report raises concerns about an underinvestment in both the workforce and specialist services. It notes that there has been a decrease in the number of additional support for learning teachers (SG stats ref) and this has in turn lead to an increase in the workload of teachers who have to spend additional time supporting children and young people with additional

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[103] https://www.gov.scot/news/more-than-gbp-4-million-for-educational-psychologists/

support needs. The report comments that teachers have reported "moving to a crisis-led role", with less time for preparation and planning.

The report also raises concerns about a reduction in the number of support staff and the variation of these numbers across local authorities.

The report presents concerns about access to support, such as educational psychologists, mental health services or other specific support services. It notes that a delay in accessing these services can impact on the identification of need and lead to a delay in appropriate support being put in place. It also reports concerns about perceived changing criteria for accessing support and what it sees as those with complex needs being prioritised for specialist intervention with class teachers being required to meet the needs of other children and young people.

Another area the report is concerned with is access to professional learning for teachers. This theme is common among a number of sources of evidence with some requesting specific training related to specific additional support needs in both ITE and CLPD. The report recognises the resources that are available, such as the Autism Toolbox and the Dyslexia Toolkit, however, indicates that these are not a substitute for high quality professional learning. It is difficult to quantify these concerns without having access to further information about the type and frequency that teachers are able to access as part of their CLPD.

3. Rising need

The report notes there has been an increase in the number of children with additional support needs and the rise in instances of challenging behaviour. The issues presented here about the increase in the number of children and young people is consistent with the data that is available from the SG statistics. This is discussed as part of section one above.

4. Broader educational issues

The report notes concerns about the narrative around achievement and attainment and comments that the system should be set up to recognise the particular achievements of children and young people which goes beyond SQA qualifications. The report also notes concerns about difficulties in accessing alternative assessment arrangements for children and young people with additional support needs.

The report concludes that these factors are impacting negatively on the wellbeing of both teachers and young people and on the educational experience of young people. It makes a number of recommendations and urges all those who are involved in Scottish education to come together to

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agree a response to address these concerns. Some of these recommendations are focused on how to attract and retain more teachers and support staff, address issues of workload and morale and support high quality training opportunities. In addition, it makes recommendations around supporting other agencies, addressing challenges within the school environment and broadening the dialogue around achievement and attainment.

Conclusion

The report provides a helpful insight into the views of some teachers about what works within the system and some of the challenges that exist. There is a focus in the report on issues around resource and many of the recommendations are made on this basis. There is supportive commentary of the principles of inclusion and the additional support for learning framework. However, the report notes that there is a gap between policy and practice. There are a number of themes within the report that are common across a number of other sources of evidence. This includes, in addition to resources, access to professional development and access to specialist teachers, provision and services.

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National Parent Forum Scotland– Additional Support for Learning Survey Results 2018

Background

Between August and October 2018, the National Parent Forum Scotland (NPFS) conducted a survey of parents across Scotland on additional support needs and additional support for learning. The survey received responses from 594 parents from 31 of the 32 local authorities.

Context

It should be noted that the survey does not, nor was it intended to provide, a representative reflection of the experiences of all parents of children and young people with additional support needs in Scotland. While the evidence base is relatively small, responses have been received from almost all authorities in Scotland. Although no further information is provided on the demographics of respondents. The findings presented within the report are only based on the experiences of those who chose to respond to the survey and while these experiences are very valuable, the conclusions presented within this report must be viewed within this context.

Key Findings

The key findings from the survey are:

- 36% of respondents know what additional support their child is entitled to. Respondents often described difficulties in finding this information:
- 71% of respondents were involved in the discussions surrounding their child's ASL needs and some of these parents found this useful and beneficial to their child. However, a very common theme was that the parents did not feel their views were taken into account.
- Almost a third (31%) of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that the ASL resources and support in their child's school meet their individual child's needs - this is down 14% from the 45% in 2015. For the sample of respondents that agreed strongly, this is down 9% (34% compared to 25% in 2015).
- Over half respondents (54% compared to 38% in 2015) say their child has been directly or partly affected by changes to ASL provision in their school, with 29% unsure. Only 9% of the parents who responded were consulted about this change in provision and, of these, only 37% found this discussion useful.

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- 85% of parents were not signposted to services, such as Enquire, by their school or local authority.
- 53% do not think their child's written report clearly explains the progress they have made and the level of learning they have achieved or are working towards.
- 51% do not think their child has the same opportunities as other pupils in the school.

Suggestions to promote good communication and schools in relation to ASL were plentiful and varied but included:

- more regular face to face meetings
- more information
- realistic expectations being laid out
- greater transparency
- more honesty and openness.

Other themes raised:

- Respondents feel more special schools are required; mainstreaming is not working for their child.
- The staff shortage in Scottish schools is negatively impacting on students with ASN.
- More consistency in support across the country is desired.
- Teachers need more training.
- There were also instances of children who are without a school placement at all or on part time timetables as there is no suitable school placement in the area.

Conclusion

Despite the small number of respondents, many of the issues raised in this survey are consistent with evidence available elsewhere. Again difficulties in accessing information and support was raised as an issue, a theme which has emerged from a number of sources including 'Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved', responses to Committee and to the consultation on the guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming. In addition, the survey notes concerns about how additional support for learning is resourced and the variance in this provision across the country. This is consistent with a range of other evidence that has been considered as part of this review. Another common issue is the availability of training and support for teachers and support staff, a theme raised in other evidence.

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Summary of Conclusions

The desk review of current evidence has identified a number of common themes about what the strengths and challenges of implementation of additional support for learning are.

The qualitative evidence overwhelmingly suggests that there is a positive perception of the principle of inclusion.

There are a number of themes which have emerged from the evidence considered which focus on the challenges of implementation of additional support for learning. The most common of these are:

- Resources;
- Training;
- Exclusions;
- Parental involvement – accessibility and visibility of information;
- Type and access to provision;
- Access to specialist services and support from other agencies;
- The importance of partnership working in accessing CSPs, and in identification and assessment;
- Variation in approach across local authorities.

As has been noted throughout, the themes that are drawn from the qualitative evidence are only based on the views of those who contributed. It is important that the strengths and challenges noted above are viewed in this context.

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Table 1: Number of pupils with additional support needs learning some or all of their time in mainstream schools, and no of pupils learning in special schools 2012-2018

Year	No of Pupils with some or all time in mainstream	No of pupils in Special Schools
2018	185,791	6,823
2017	183491	6,654
2016	170,329	6,668
2015	153,192	6,871
2014	140,542	6,940
2013	131,621	6,956
2012	118,034	6,953

Source: Supplementary statistics Pupil Census 2012-2018
Notes: The legislative definition has remained unchanged since the Act was established in 2004 and came into force in 2005. Prior to 2010, only pupils with Co-ordinated Support Plans, Individualised Educational Programmes or who were attending a special school were recorded as having additional support needs within the national statistical collection. In 2010, the collection was extended to include anyone receiving additional support, in any setting. This has led to a large increase in the number of pupils recorded with additional support needs since 2010, and therefore accounts for some of the rise in pupils recorded as having additional support needs.

Table 2: School Estate 2012-2018

Schools	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total	Total Pupil Population
2012[1]	2,064	365	155	2,584	671,195

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2013[1]	2,056	364	149	2,569	673,502
2014[1]	2,048	362	145	2,555	676,914
2015[1]	2,039	361	144	2,544	679,958
2016[1]	2,031	359	141	2,531	684,348
2017	2,019	360	135	2,514	688,959
2018[2]	2,012	357	114	2,483	693,251

Source https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus18

Table 3: Additional Support Needs Over time

	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Pupils for whom reason for support is reported	198,935	183,257	170,372	153,106	140,472	131,527	117,755
Learning disability	13,665	14,200	14,608	15,324	15,600	15,859	15,979
Dyslexia	21,663	19,877	18,471	17,034	15,877	15,368	13,497
Other specific learning difficulty (e.g. numeric)	23,058	21,868	19,672	17,552	15,328	13,689	10,858
Other moderate learning difficulty	29,272	27,922	25,635	23,228	21,268	19,864	17,834
Visual impairment	4,574	4,331	4,177	3,839	3,544	3,373	3,028
Hearing impairment	3,332	3,097	2,965	2,738	2,534	2,441	2,253
Deafblind	59	56	51	47	42	45	47
Physical or motor impairment	8,222	8,058	7,847	7,528	7,289	7,029	6,530
Language or speech disorder	17,272	16,654	15,848	14,704	13,697	12,708	11,367
Autistic spectrum disorder	17,393	14,973	13,434	11,722	10,805	9,946	8,650
Social, emotional and behavioural difficulty	43,680	39,642	36,041	31,684	28,354	26,715	23,485

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Physical health problem	13,045	11,627	10,508	9,059	7,942	7,398	6,562
Mental health problem	4,419	3,330	2,842	2,338	1,870	1,553	1,254
Interrupted learning	4,236	3,509	3,106	2,669	2,342	2,068	1,731
English as an additional language	34,816	30,135	26,921	21,997	19,475	17,547	15,148
Looked after	8,677	8,335	8,108	7,530	7,215	6,578	5,630
More able pupil	3,189	3,274	3,270	3,123	2,706	2,244	2,408
Communication support needs	7,464	6,701	5,959	4,894	4,184	3,380	1,896
Young carer	3,248	2,500	2,044	1,653	1,188	842	441
Bereavement	2,603	2,045	1,728	1,304	1,082	898	650
Substance misuse	423	360	319	221	228	194	170
Family issues	16,486	13,973	11,968	9,700	7,770	6,038	3,636
Risk of exclusion	1,336	1,139	1,065	925	904	833	692
Other	17,844	15,959	15,225	14,156	12,836	12,442	11,838

Table 4: Teacher numbers, pupil numbers and pupil- teacher ratio

		total excluding ELC		pupils		pupil teacher ratio
2012[1]		49,867		671,218		13.5
2013		49,790		673,530		13.5
2014[2]		49,521		676,955		13.7
2015[3]		49,679		680,007		13.7
2016		49,985		684,415		13.7
2017		50,592		688,959		13.6
2018		51,138		693,251		13.6

Source https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/teachcenssuppdata/teasup2018

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Table 5 – Additional Support Needs Teaching and Support Staff 2018

Teachers employed in schools by main subject					
Main subject	Primary	Secondary	Special	Central	Total per need
			2018		
Learning support	363	836	40	211	1,449
Additional support needs general	63	132	147	22	364
Additional support needs : behavioural support	19	74	60	57	208
Additional support needs : learning difficulties	76	168	300	54	598
Additional support needs : physical disabilities	0	7	11	17	34
Hearing impairment	2	27	7	25	60
Visual impairment	1	8	3	32	44
ESOL	2	6	1	97	106
Individual total per school sector	**525**	**1,256**	**569**	**514**	**2,864**
Total per year			**2,864**		
Support Staff in schools					
Pupil support assistant	8,643	2,985	1,997		13,626
Additional support needs auxiliary or care assistant	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Behaviour Support	18	55	50		122
Classroom assistant	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Home-school link worker	73	84	15	184	356
School nurse or other medical	11	37	8	19	75
Educational Psychologist				368	368
Individual total per school sector					
Total per year			**14,547**		
TOTAL			**17,412**		

Table 6: Percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination, by pupil characteristic, 2012/13 to 2017/18

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
ASN leavers	82.5	84.3	85.7	84.7	87.1	87.9
Non-ASN leavers	92.0	93.3	93.6	93.4	94.9	95.3
All leavers	90.4	91.7	92.0	91.4	92.9	93.2

Source: Summary Statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living – June 2018

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Table 7: Percentage of school leavers in mainstream and special schools initial destination 2018

Reason for Support	Positive Destinations	Higher Education	Further Education	Training	Employment	Voluntary Work	Activity Agreement[2]	Unemployed Seeking	Unemployed Not Seeking	Unknown		Number of Leavers
No Additional Support need	**96.0**	48.1	21.9	1.5	23.3	0.7	0.6	2.9	0.8	0.4		35,414
Any Additional Support need	**89.3**	22.8	38.6	3.9	20.4	0.7	2.9	6.4	3.7	0.7		15,070

Source: https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/leavedestla

Table 8: Percentage of secondary and special school leavers from publicly funded schools by total qualifications achieved and Additional Support Need in 2017/18

Reason for Support	1+ at SCQF Level 2 or better	1+ at SCQF Level 3 or better	1+ at SCQF Level 4 or better	1+ at SCQF Level 5 or better	1+ at SCQF Level 6 or better	1+ at SCQF Level 7	Number of Leavers[1]
No Additional Support need	*	*	98.2	92.2	71.3	24.0	35,414
Any Additional Support need	*	*	88.0	67.2	37.6	10.1	15,070

Source: https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/leavedestla

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Table 9: Percentage of P1, P4, P7 and S3 achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy, by ASN status

Stage	ASN pupil status	Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Literacy	Numeracy
Early level	ASN	60	54	64	49	66
	Non-ASN	84	82	90	79	87
	Unknown	58	56	65	54	65
	All	**81**	**78**	**87**	**75**	**85**
first level	ASN	53	46	65	42	53
	Non-ASN	86	81	91	78	84
	Unknown	58	51	61	49	58
	All	77	72	85	69	76
second level	ASN	55	47	65	43	51
	Non-ASN	89	84	92	82	85
	Unknown	58	53	59	52	63
	All	79	73	84	70	75
third level	ASN	79	77	81	74	76
	Non-ASN	95	95	96	93	95
	Unknown	72	71	73	69	81
	All	90	89	91	87	89

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Qualitative evidence considered

Included in the Main, Enable Scotland, March 2017:

https://www.enable.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/our-campaigns/included-in-the-main/

How is Additional Support for Learning working in practice? Scottish Parliament Education Committee, May 2017:

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Reports/ASN_6th_Report_2017.pdf

Further scrutiny by Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee:

https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/103397.aspx

Excellence and equity for all - guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming: consultation analysis, Scottish Government June 2018:

https://www.gov.scot/publications/excellence-equity-guidance-presumption-mainstreaming-analysis-consultation-responses/

Research on the experiences of children and young people receiving support in mainstream and special schools, Research Scotland on behalf of Scottish Government, completed June 2018 not yet published:

https://www.gov.scot/publications/additional-support-learning-research-experience-children-young-people-those-support/

Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved, Children In Scotland, National Autistic Society and Scottish Autism, September 2018:

https://childreninscotland.org.uk/not-included-not-engaged-not-involved-survey-finds-autistic-children-are-missing-out-on-education/

Education Scotland evidence from inspection and other engagement. This will include an analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement gathered through inspection, focusing on HGIOS4 quality indicator 3.1 on *Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion*. This indicator is evaluated in all inspections and is part of the evidence base for the National Improvement Framework.

National Parent Forum – Additional Support for Learning Survey Results
https://www.npfs.org.uk/2018/11/survey-results-additional-support-needs-additional-support-for-learning/

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EIS – Additional Support for Learning in Scottish school education: Exploring the gap between promise and practice:

https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/education/ASN/ExploringTheGap.pdf

Summary of inspection findings of Quality Indicator 3.1 – ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Academic years   **2017/18**
                    2018/19 (reports published to 23 August 2019)

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Primary Inspections Summary

2017/18

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	6	26	40	23	11	0	0
Percentage	6%	25%	38%	22%	10%	0%	N/A

Total   106

2018/19

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	2	20	28	18	7	0	0
Percentage	3%	27%	37%	24%	9%	0%	N/A

Total   75

Secondary Inspections Summary

2017/18

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	0	5	7	6	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	26%	37%	32%	5%	0%	N/A

Total   19

2018/19

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	0	6	8	4	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	32%	42%	21%	5%	0%	N/A

Total   19

Special Inspections Summary

2017/18

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	0	4	2	4	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	36%	18%	36%	9%	0%	N/A

Total   11

2018/19

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	0	0	5	2	1	1	0
Percentage	0%	0%	56%	22%	11%	11%	N/A

Total   9

ELC Inspections Summary

2017/18

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	1	34	55	23	10	0	0
Percentage	1%	28%	45%	19%	8%	0%	N/A

Total   123

2018/19

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory	No Response
Number	0	15	45	20	6	1	0
Percentage	0%	17%	52%	23%	7%	1%	N/A

Total   87

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Summary of engagement

ASL Review - Summary of engagement

During phase 2, considerable efforts were made to engage with children and young people; parents and carers with direct and lived experience and; practitioners, in and beyond education, who are directly involved in the delivery of services. The Chair sought to ensure breadth and balance by engaging across Scotland and with representatives from across sectors. The Chair was supported during phase 2 by Joanna McCreadie[104].

Great care was taken by the Chair to consider each contribution fully and follow up as appropriate. All contributors were given an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity to enable them to share information confidently and honestly.

Written submissions

Over 200 emails were received by the Chair's dedicated mailbox. The vast majority of these were from parents and carers in which they shared their unique experience of how additional support for learning was working in practice for their family.

Teachers, pupil support assistants, other school staff and other professionals who provide support to children and young people, also shared through the mailbox their experiences and perspectives.

With the support of organisations such as Children in Scotland and My Rights, My Say, children and young people were supported to share their own experiences of what works well for them at school and the things they would like to be improved.

A survey was issued to all 32 local authorities and questions were circulated to Social Work Scotland. All the responses received were considered in detail by the Chair.

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[104] Some of the engagement noted below was carried out by Joanna McCreadie on behalf of the Chair

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A session was held at the Additional Support for Learning Summit in October 2019[105]. Attendees were asked to consider a range of questions set by the Chair on the implementation of additional support for learning. The Chair carefully considered all the responses.

The Chair also considered correspondence from a wide range of organisations and groups. A number of these organisations provided the Chair with background, information and examples of their work and experiences. Some organisations provided a written response to the review on behalf of their organisation or group. These included:

- CELCIS
- Association of Heads and Deputes Scotland (AHDS)
- See Me
- Includem
- Dundee Young Ambassadors
- My Rights My Say
- Downs Syndrome Scotland
- Enquire
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
- National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)
- Royal Caledonian Education Trust
- Salvesen Mindroom Centre
- Families Outside
- Children in Scotland
- National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT)
- Edinburgh Secondary Headteachers
- A joint response from the authors of *Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved*
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
- Scottish Commission of Learning Disability
- Royal Blind School
- Children's Health Scotland
- English as an Additional Language service - Edinburgh
- NASUWT
- National Parent Forum of Scotland's January 2020 feedback report from their 6 Additional Support for Learning focus groups

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[105] The ASL summit brought together a range of stakeholders with the main aim of sharing good practice across additional support for learning.

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Direct engagement

The Chair undertook to meet with as many groups and organisations as possible during phase 2, through phone or video calls, meetings, focus groups and attendance at events. Due to timing constraints, it was not possible for the Chair to meet with every person or group who is involved in, or had an experience or perspective to share. However, where this was the case, the Chair encouraged those individuals or groups to share their experience and perspective through written correspondence to the mailbox.

The Chair undertook the following:

- A meeting with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
- A meeting with Councillor McCabe, COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People
- A meeting of the Additional support for Learning Implementation Group (ASLIG)[106]
- A meeting with the Chief Executive/ Registrar of the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS)
- A meeting with the Chair of Doran National Commissioning Group
- A meeting with the Chair of ADES
- A meeting with the President of the Health and Education Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland
- Meetings with representatives from Education Scotland
- Meetings with representatives from the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate
- A meeting with a representative from local authority finance directors
- A meeting with the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP)
- A meeting with the ADES ASN Network
- A meeting with a representative from Skills Development Scotland
- Attendance at the COSLA CYP Board meeting
- A meeting with the Association of Support for Learning Officers (ASLO)
- A meeting with representatives from CELCIS
- Attendance at Social Work Scotland Standing Committee
- A meeting with a representative from CAMHS
- Attendance at the ADES Early Learning and Childcare network meeting
- A meeting with a representative of the Scottish Council of Deans
- Attendance at the Keys to Life Leadership group

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[106] ASLIG is chaired by Jan Savage and comprises of representatives from Scottish Government, Education Scotland, COSLA, ADES, Children in Scotland, NPFS, EIS, ASPEP and Unison

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- A meeting with representatives from the Scottish Network of Highly Able Pupils (SNAP)
- A meeting with representatives from the Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)
- Attendance at Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) Committee
- Attendance at a focus group with varied representatives[107]
- A meeting with representatives from the Independent Care Review
- Attendance at a focus group with representatives from the Grant Aided Special Schools, National Centres, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)
- A meeting with representatives of the Scottish Community Development Centre and Community Health Exchange
- A meeting with Audit Scotland
- A meeting with representatives of organisations who support Armed Forces Children in Scotland
- A meeting with representatives from the Carnegie Trust
- A meeting with representatives from Carers Trust Scotland
- Attendance at the Allied Health Professionals CYP Board meeting
- A meeting with the Assistant Secretary of the EiS
- Attendance at the EiS ASN network meeting
- Attendance at a Making a difference: a day of learning for pupil support assistants[108]
- Attendance at a focus group with Unison members
- Attendance at a focus group with Association of Heads and Deputes Scotland members
- A meeting with representatives from NASUWT
- A meeting with NAIT
- Attendance at meeting of BOCSH – a network of secondary Headteachers
- A meeting with representatives from Achievement Bute
- Phone calls with individual parents
- A meeting with staff at Enquire
- A visit and engagement with the Family Led Information Point, East Lothian
- A meeting with staff from ASL Resolve
- A meeting with staff from Let's Talk ASN
- A meeting with staff from Common Ground mediation
- Attendance at a focus group for parents - Aberdeen
- Attendance at a focus group for parents - Aberdeenshire
- A visit and engagement with Columba 1400 – Clackmannanshire
- A meeting with a representative from Connect

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[107] A range of stakeholders were invited to this focus group. Those who attended included representatives of Education Scotland, NPFS, Let's Talk ASN ,My Rights, My Say , AHP CYP Lead, National Autistic Society, Scottish Autism, For Scotland's Disabled Children (fSDC), Scottish Sensory Centre, CYPCS and A24 Scotland
[108] A conference for pupil support assistants organised by Children in Scotland

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- Attendance at focus group for parents in Edinburgh and Glasgow organised by the National Parent Forum of Scotland.[109]
- Attendance at a focus group with PDA Awareness & Support Group – North Lanarkshire
- Attendance at a focus group for parents – Stirling
- Attendance at a focus group for parents - REACH Lanarkshire Autism
- Attendance at a focus group for parents - Differabled Scotland
- A meeting with Children and Young People Commissioner Scotland
- A focus group for children and young people[110]
- A meeting with members of the Scottish Youth Parliament
- A meeting with representatives from the Children's Parliament
- A meeting with the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion
- Attendance at the Children in Scotland Conference, including a session on the ASL Review and with the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion
- A meeting with the Lead for North Regional Improvement Collaborative
- A visit and discussion with staff at a school in Moray Council
- A visit and discussion with staff at a school in Edinburgh City Council
- A meeting with former teachers
- A series of discussions with teachers

Engagement was[111] undertaken with the following local authorities: [112]
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Dundee City Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Edinburgh City Council
- Fife Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Moray Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Stirling Council

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[109] A further 4 focus groups were held by NPFS in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Inverness and Dumfries. A summary of the key points raised during these focus groups was shared with the Chair. The report from these focus groups is available on NPFS's website: https://www.npfs.org.uk/2020/06/19/additional-support-for-learning-review/

[110] This session was organised and supported by My Rights, My Say

[111] Each local authority designed their own programme for this engagement. Many included engagement across a range of individuals, including local authority staff, school and early years staff, parents, children and young people and others involved in supporting children and young people.

[112] Planned visits to Highland Council and Scottish Borders Council were unfortunately postponed and could not be rescheduled in time for the completion of phase 2.

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Additional support needs and associated issues, which act as barriers to learning

Children and young people with additional support needs have many common and shared experiences. They are often conscious that they are 'different' from their peers and are keenly aware about how teachers and schools treat them.

Having an additional support need can mean that children and young people become separated from their peers; feel socially isolated; experience stigma and discrimination; struggle to have their voices and views heard and; may not have their human rights fulfilled. The experience of the child in school is often reflected in families and on parents. The shame and stigma experienced by children can be seen in the 'blame' parents feel from others and experiences where they are not respected and listened to. Taken together, this creates significant, unnecessary pressure for families.

The range of issues which create barriers for children and young people in learning and education .include both diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions and life experiences.   Markedly different conditions, such as autism or being a young carer, have a strikingly similar impact on children's lives. For example, a looked after child may feel embarrassed and unsure when they arrive in a new school because of a care placement move. They might not have the proper school uniform, understand the rules of the school or know anyone. A newly arrived asylum seeker might have a very similar experience, with the additional challenge of learning English. Both have similar challenges – but very different circumstances. Both will be deeply affected by **how** teachers and the school work to meet their needs.

An identified additional support need assists in assessment, planning and delivery of support in school. However, all children and young people are individuals and their need and the response required must respond to the whole child or young person not to the "condition" or "issue" as a discrete problem.

This is a very brief overview of the key issues highlighted to the review with links to sources of understanding and expertise.

Additional support need	Associated issues which act as barriers to learning	Further information and relevant organisations
Adoption	Impacted by trauma and loss; struggle with attachment and relationships; need support to recover from trauma; readiness to learn affected; experiences a range of behavioural issues.	Scottish Adoption https://www.scottishadoption.org/
Armed forces families	Frequent moves of school and community; disrupted learning; separation from parents; living with the worry of a parent on active service; direct experience of loss.	Royal Caledonian Education Trust https://www.rcet.org.uk/
Asylum seekers and refugees	Challenged by living in new culture; learning new language; uncertainty about future; living with trauma and loss.	Scottish Refugee Council https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	Difficulties in paying attention with lack of focus and concentration; impulsive and unpredictable; hyperactive and unable to sit still; can't plan ahead; struggles to finish tasks.	ADHD Information Services (ADDiss) http://www.addiss.co.uk/
Autistic spectrum	Difficulty understanding and participating in social communication; struggles with social interaction; problems with developing and sustaining positive relationships; difficulties in social imagination; may think very rigidly.	National Autistic Society https://www.autism.org.uk/ Scottish Autism https://www.scottishautism.org/ Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved https://www.notengaged.com/ Reach Lanarkshire Autism https://reachautism.org.uk/ Salvesen Mindroom http://www.mindroom.org/

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Bullying	Feeling frightened and hurt; worried about what will happen next; experiences social isolation.	Respect Me https://respectme.org.uk/
Children in hospital for long stays	Feel excluded from school; social isolation; missing key learning experiences; impact on physical and mental health.	NHS Health Scotland http://www.healthscotland.scot/ Children's Health Scotland https://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/
Children in and affected by the Criminal Justice system	Experience of stress and worry; feel excluded and different from peers; risk taking behaviour; impact on physical and mental health.	Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ) https://www.cycj.org.uk/ Includem https://www.includem.org/
Children whose parents or family members are imprisoned	Feeling ashamed and stigmatised; worrying about imprisoned parent; experience of loss; impact on physical and mental health.	Families Outside https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/
Children and young people affected by chronic illness	Conditions, symptoms and impact can vary widely; education disrupted by medical appointments and hospital admissions; cannot fully participate in school life; struggle with focus and concentration; social isolation; disrupted peer relationships.	NHS Health Scotland http://www.healthscotland.scot/ Children's Health Scotland https://www.childrenshealthscotland.org/
Deaf and hearing impaired	Extent of hearing impairment varies widely; wide range of adaptations, adjustments and support needs; hearing impairment can be a barrier to learning; social and peer isolation; mental health impact.	National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) https://www.ndcs.org.uk/ Scottish Sensory Centre http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/

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Developmental delay for example barriers to learning as a result of a health need, associated with e.g. foetal alcohol spectrum disorder or premature birth	Social, emotional and physical functioning different to chronological age; difficulty with peer relationships; readiness to learn impacted.	
Down's Syndrome	Health difficulties; learning difficulties; different interests to other children; wide variation in children's difficulties and needs; social, emotional and physical functioning different to chronological age.	Down's Syndrome Scotland https://www.dsscotland.org.uk/
Dyslexia	Struggle with reading and writing; difficulty in spelling; struggle with sequencing; feel embarrassed and self-conscious; experiences stress in learning experiences; cover up difficulties through behaviour; social isolation; impact on mental health.	Dyslexia Scotland (DS) https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/
Development Coordination difficulties (dyspraxia)	Delays in early developmental milestones; appears clumsy and poorly co-ordinated; difficulties with ordinary childhood activities; adaptations, adjustments and support vary widely.	Dyspraxia Foundation https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-children/
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Struggle to understand and be understood; difficulties in peer relationships; barriers to learning; may have responsibilities in family for translation; left behind educationally.	Scottish Refugee Council https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/
Highly able learners	Intellectual ability may not be matched by emotional maturity and social skills; assumptions made that	Scottish Network for Able Pupils (SNAP)

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	high intellectual ability does not need any additional support and encouragement; difficulties in peer relationships; emotional and mental health issues.	https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/ablepupils/
Learning difficulties	Social, emotional and intellectual abilities may not match chronological age; can feel different to and isolated from peers; may mask learning difficulties; wide range of learning difficulties need understood in context of individual child.	Enable Scotland https://www.enable.org.uk/ The Scottish Commission for Learning Disability https://www.scld.org.uk/
Looked after	Impacted by trauma and loss; difficulties in peer relationships; social isolation; developmental delay; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; physical health; mental health.	Who Cares Scotland https://www.whocaresscotland.org/ CELCIS https://www.celcis.org/
Mental Health	Wide range of mental health issues; ability to focus on learning; social isolation; experience of trauma and loss.	See Me Scotland https://www.seemescotland.org/
Physical and motor impairment	Impact of impairments varies widely and may change over time; social isolation; feels excluded; difficulties in peer relationships; adjustments, adaptations and equipment vary.	Capability Scotland https://capability-scotland.org.uk/
Selective mutism	Speaks to a small number of people and unwilling to speak to others; does not speak at all; experiencing difficulties due to loss or trauma; social isolation; difficulties in relationships; impact on mental health.	Call Scotland https://www.callscotland.org.uk/Blog/selective-mutism-and-technology/

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Speech disorder	Difficulty in making sounds in speech; stuttering; problems pronouncing sounds; struggling to communicate with others; difficult with self confidence and self esteem; impact on relationships with others; impact on emotional wellbeing.	Call Scotland https://www.callscotland.org.uk/about/
Language disorder	Difficulty understanding others; struggles to express thoughts, ideas and feelings; feels frustrated; masks language difficulties; behavioural issues; social isolation.	Call Scotland https://www.callscotland.org.uk/about/
Gypsy/Traveller families	Frequent moves in education; disrupted learning experience; experience of prejudice/discrimination; socially isolated. Family fears of negative impact of school on Gypsy/Traveller culture	STEP http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/
Visually impaired	Exclusion from practical subjects, social times and school trips; experience social isolation; impact on emotional wellbeing; barriers to learning impact on attainment and achievement.	RNIB Scotland www.rnib.org.uk/scotland Scottish Sensory Centre http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/
Young carers	Missing school; difficulties completing homework; impact of caring responsibilities on social activities; feeling isolated and different; impact on physical and mental health.	Carers Scotland https://www.carersuk.org/scotland

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Overlap between Equality Act and the Additional Support for Learning Act (taken from Accessibility Strategies guidance - Annex A)

Pupils' needs which may meet definition of disability under the Equality Act to whom education accessibility strategies apply:
- Physical or Mental impairment including:
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dyslexia
- Diabetes
- Eating disorder (diagnosed)
- Gross obesity
- Disfigurement
- ADHD
- Incontinence
- Epilepsy
- Learning difficulties, including severe and complex
- Hearing impairment
- Some conditions may progress to have a substantial adverse effect; heart conditions, Sickle cell anaemia, Rheumatoid arthritis.

Pupils' needs which **automatically** meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act and to whom education accessibility strategies apply:
- Cancer
- HIV
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Certified/Registered Visual Impairment
- Severe long-term disfigurement

There may be overlap between the Acts e.g. a pupil may have a disability and may also have additional support needs.

Pupils who may require additional support under the ASL Act have a barrier to learning as a result of one of the four factors giving rise to additional support needs:
- Learning environment
- Family circumstances
- Disability or health need
- Social and emotional factors

These may include:
- Have motor or sensory impairment
- Are being bullied
- Are particularly able or talented
- Have experienced a bereavement
- Are interrupted learners
- Have a learning disability
- Are looked after by the local authority
- Have a learning difficulty, such as dyslexia
- Are living with parents who are abusing substances
- Are living with parents who have mental health problems
- Have English as an additional language
- Are not attending school regularly
- Have emotional or social difficulties
- Are on the child protection register
- Are young carers

Or for any other reason

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Information and support for parents

National Parent Forum for Scotland https://www.npfs.org.uk/	ENQUIRE national helpline and advice https://enquire.org.uk/	Parents Advocacy and Rights (PAR) https://parparentsadvocacyrights.com/
Connect https://connect.scot/parent		

Children's rights

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS) https://www.cypcs.org.uk/	Children's Parliament https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/	Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) https://syp.org.uk/
My Rights My Say https://myrightsmysay.scot/	Children in Scotland https://childreninscotland.org.uk/	Who Cares Scotland https://www.whocaresscotland.org/

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Supporting Learners Programme Plan

Month columns: Nov-19 | Dec-19 (EODC) | Jan-20 | Feb-20 | Mar-20 (EODC) | Apr-20 | May-20 (EODC) | Jun-20 | Jul-20 (EODC) | Aug-20 | Sep-20 (EODC) | Oct-20 | Nov-20 (EODC) | Dec-20

Theme/Activity	Lead/Assigned To	Status	Link to 2020 Review (Broad Theme)	Timeline / Activity Notes
Looking Outward Nationally	CMcD	Ongoing	3.1	Looking Outwards (ongoing across all months)
Data Capture/Analysis	CMcD/Performance Team	Ongoing	1.1 / 1.2	Data Analysis & Triangulation / Ongoing Evaluation; Focus on "Achievement" in its widest sense
Project Management	CMcD/Working Group	Ongoing	3.1 / 3.2 / 4.1	Onboarding; Project Management Meetings; Monthly Project Management Meetings (Reconvene)
Project Management H&S Sub Group	CMcD/H&S/Trade Unions	Ongoing	3.1 / 3.2 / 4.1	Meeting, Meeting, Meeting; Monthly Sub-Group Meetings (Reconvene)
Quality Improvement Activity	QIM/QIO Team/SLTs	Ongoing	1.2 / 2.1 / 3.1	2.3; 3.2 (postponed due to COVID); 3.1 (QA of ScotXed; Use of PSA; 5 Roles etc.)
Gathering Staff Views	CMcD	Ongoing	3.2	Baseline Staff Engagement; Ongoing as Required
Gathering Family Views	CMcD/DC	Ongoing	3.2 / 6.1	NPFS Events; PCC Event; Learning Survey; Accessibilty Strategy; Returning to School Building Survey; Ongoing
Child's Planning Support Process (Transitions)	CMcD/SM	Implemented	6.1	Review of Child's Planning Support Process; Implement; Future Planning & Trend Spotting; Monitor and Review
DSM (inc. allocation and Role of PSAs)	CJ/CMcD/SM	Implemented	1.2 / 5.2	PSA/DSM Consultation; Finalised; Review of Role of PSA; Monitor and Review/QA Allocations
CLPL: Child's Plans	CMcD	Launched	5.1 / 8.2	Child's Planning Best Practice; Launch; Monitor impact via Child's Planning Support/Support to Schools from EPS
Information for Parents/Learners	CMcD/QI Team	Ongoing	6.1	Update of Resources available via ACC Website; Digital Learning Hub; EP Service Hub inc. Mediation Services (SACRO)
H&S: ACC Violence/Aggression	AM (H&S Team)	Ongoing	3.1 / 3.2	Policy Redesign and Consultation with Stakeholders; ICFS Input
CLPL: Inclusive Practices	CMcD/Practitioners' Group	Launched	5.1 / 6.1	Onboarding; Monthly Meetings; Sway Launch; Ongoing Alteration and Addition
Emergency Support Forum (ESF)	SM/CMcD	Ongoing	1.1 / 5.1 / 6.1	Onboarding; Twice-weekly Meetings (Resource allocation inc. Review); Consideration of Vision; Streamline of Practices
Vulnerable Hubs	SM/MS/CMcD/CM at al	Ongoing	1.1 / 5.1 / 6.1	Establish; Launch and Monitor; Reset; Re-establish as part of Support Continuum
SFL Bespoke CLPL	CMcD/Practitioners' Group	Launched	5.1	Role of Support for Learning Developed; Launch; Design of Bespoke/Supporting CLPL Offer
Microsoft: Plans & CLPL	SM	Launched	5.1	HT Launch; Implement; Use in CPS; Use in CPS
SEEMiS Guidance	CMcD	Launched	5.1	HT Feedback; Link to PSA Allocation and QI Activity; ScotXed; QA and Comparative Analysis
Partnership Forums	GS (QIM)	Ongoing	1.1 / 3.1	Chairs' Meet
Education Social Work	GS (CO)/CMcD/FC/LS	Ongoing	1.1	Realignment of Services: Consultation and Workgroup; Business Case; Implement, Monitor and Review
Learning & Teaching Standard	SM/Raising Attainment Group	Launched	2.1 / 3.1 / 3.2 / 5.1	HT Feedback; Adapt for Digital; Implement, Monitor and Review
GIRFEC Guidance	ES/GS	Ongoing	3.1 / 3.2	COVID-19 Multi-Agency Guidance Created and Adapted; Further Adaptation/Review as Required; Multi-Agency Focus
ICR: The Promise/Plan (VS)	LG	Ongoing	2.1 / 3.1 / 3.2 / 6.1	Ongoing 5-Year Plan
Accessibility Strategy	MS	Ongoing	2.1 / 3.1 / 3.2 / 6.1	Drafting and Consultation with Stakeholders; EODC; Implement, Monitor and Review
Interactive Staged Intervention Framework	CMcD	Ongoing	5.1	Working (Digital) Draft Reflective of Ongoing Changes/Circumstances; Launch; Implement, Monitor and Review
Realignment of Support Services	SM/CMcD	Ongoing	1.1 / 5.1 / 6.1	Realignment Based on Need/Circumstance; EODC; Implement, Monitor and Review
Role of PT Guidance/Pupil Support	CMcD/Working Group	Launched	5.1	Drafting and Feedback; Launch; Feedback
ACC PEERS Framework (Supporting All Learners)	CMcD/Working Group	Launched	7.1	Launch; Implement; Monitor and Review
Equality and Diversity Policy Update	KT/Policy Refresh Group	Ongoing	3.1 / 3.2	Ongoing Monthly Meetings and Consultation
Vision Statement for ASN & Support Services	SM/CMcD (in consultation)	Planning	1.1 / 3.1 / 3.2 / 6.1	EODC; Consult and Develop
UNCRC: Child Friendly City	MR	Ongoing	3.1 / 3.2 / 6.1 / 8.1	Increase focus and emphasis on child's voice capture
Curriculum and Destination Pathways	AD/Destinations	Ongoing	2.1 / 6.1	Priority Group; Onboarding Partners/HTs; Implement via Hubs and ICFS Resources
Nurture (Relational Approaches) Strategy	Leadership of Change (HWB)	Ongoing	1.2 / 7.1	Looking Outward; Strategy Adoption/Onboarding; Readiness Assessment and Pilot
Coordinated Support Plans (CSPs)	MS/EPS	Ongoing	8.2	Refresh/Review Guidance and Training; Planning Interactions
Dyslexia Guidance Refresh	CMcD/EPS	Ongoing	5.1 / 6.1	Onboarding; Task & Finish Group (inc. Consultation)

LIVE/DYNAMIC DOCUMENT - SUBJECT TO ALTERATION

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Accessibility Plan
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/20/129
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Mhairi Shewan
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.5

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:-

2.1 approves the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan (Appendix 1); and
2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to review the impact of the Plan in 2023 in accordance with legislation.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1. **Purpose of the Plan**

3.1.1 The Accessibility Plan ensures that long-term strategic planning and implementation processes of Aberdeen City Council meet the requirements of sections 1 to 3 of the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002.

3.1.2 In keeping with legislation, this Plan will ensure we are:
   ▪ enabling and supporting disabled pupils to access the curriculum
   ▪ improving the accessibility of our school buildings
   ▪ improving communication with pupils and parents and carers in a variety of appropriate formats.

3.2 **Developing the Plan**

3.2.1 A range of data sets were reviewed to help gather initial baseline data to support the development of this Plan. These included Population Needs Data already available, rich information gleaned from recent Quality Improvement Visits, surveys conducted over the last school session and information held on the range of needs and disabilities (pre-pandemic) evident in our children and young people.

3.2.2 Qualitative data has been sought to complement this process. This was mainly gathered through digital consultation with parents, learners, children's services staff, voluntary organisations and a range of Council functions. Further information was also gathered from the national additional support for learning review. Helpfully, a range of cross cutting themes emerged which have provided a clear direction.

3.2.3 In keeping with legislation, views were sought on the following three questions:
- Is the curriculum accessible for all?
- Can everyone access the physical environment?
- Does everyone have access to information in a timely manner which takes account of diversity and meets their communication needs?

3.3 Is the curriculum accessible for all?

3.3.1 Data from learners, parents and quality improvement visits identifies that the curriculum is accessible for most, but further efforts are required to ensure that it is accessible to a minority of our learners. In almost all cases the children and young people most at risk of not having an accessible curriculum have an individual plan (Individual Education Plan or Child's Plan)

3.3.2 The use of accessible technology such as Texthelp and Google tools is recognised as a strength. These enable learners to individualise their support and access the curriculum as independently as possible.

3.3.3 Effective curriculum design places the needs of learners at the centre of development with high aspirations and flexible learning pathways. Although there is some evidence of flexibility not being in place in a few cases, attainment measures for children with additional support needs in Aberdeen City are higher than both the virtual comparator and national average.

3.3.4 Aberdeen City's four-year average positive destination figure is 90.68% and 84.88% for young people with additional support needs. The figure sits below the virtual comparator (88.54%) and national average (89.17%) and highlights a need to review post school transitions.

3.3.5 The views of parents/carers were sought initially in the context of The National Parent Forum for Scotland's (NPFS) consultation around the national review of Additional Support for Learning. All parents who participated voiced the desire for mandatory professional learning regarding additional support needs. The need for high quality professional learning also came through surveys previously reported to this Committee through the Supporting Learners Programme and this is being progressed at pace.

3.3.6 Access to the curriculum is impacted when learners are not in school. The total number of primary school exclusions is at a three year low. Exclusion levels across secondary schools vary significantly and a reduction is being supported through our Quality Improvement approaches, our Supporting Learners programme and a review of our Exclusion Policy and guidance. There is a need to ensure that staff have a solid understanding of Education (Additional Support

for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) and the Equality Act 2010 and this will be built into our professional learning calendar.

3.3.7   Parents made reference to a lack of personalised support or range of extracurricular activities of interest to all children. While it is not possible to provide activities to represent all interests, there is evidence that better promotion and communication could help children and young people access a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

3.3.8   The Independent Children's Rights Impact Assessment on the response to COVID-19 in Scotland indicates that many children and young people with additional support needs have been unable to access adequate additional support for learning or teaching either in school or remotely. Feedback from parents across Aberdeen City is mixed with many reporting very good support whilst others feeling that digital support was less impactful. The needs and supports available to children over the next few months will be carefully monitored through live data monitoring to inform the shaping of services around the needs of children with additional support needs.

3.3.9   Some groups of learners with additional support will be impacted in the medium to long-term by the pandemic. Our curriculum needs to respond flexibly to the changing needs of our learners in the current context. Given this, our 2020-2021 quality improvement visits will focus on how the needs of those impacted by COVID or in receipt of an individual plan are being met.

3.4   Can everyone access the physical environment?

3.4.1   34 schools (58%) are graded as A or B for suitability and some have specialist resources. The remaining 25 buildings are graded as "C – Poor". Many of these are the oldest buildings in the estate, including nine Victorian buildings, the design and construction make it challenging to improve their suitability, often because they cannot easily be made fully accessible for those with limited mobility. Accessibility will be a key driver in the upcoming review on the School Estate.

3.4.2   Parents requested that consideration be given to widening our understanding of disability access. This should include an audit of school buildings looking at access for all disabilities not just physical disabilities and consideration of how needs can be met. This must include assessing spaces from a sensory (autistic) perspective and for those with sensory impairments by or with input from specialist services including, for example NHS. This approach will help identify how best to support when operating in a building with limited flexibility.

3.4.3   Learners identified that signage in school could be improved by being at an appropriate height and labelled inclusively. This will be fed into the review of the School Estate.

3.5   Does everyone have access to information in a timely manner which takes account of diversity and meets their communication needs?

3.5.1 The recent local Child Friendly Cities Evaluation Report highlights key strengths including well-established participatory approaches and groups which enable children and young people to influence decision-making. It noted further work being required to ensure greater opportunities to influence a wider range of decisions that directly affect the lives of learners, personally and at a city-wide level. This ability to influence decision making will be taken forward through the Child Friendly Cities Action Plan.

3.5.2 Further consideration and efforts need to be undertaken to ensure that communications from all services including health, justice, social services are accessible, easy-to-understand and child friendly. The planned communication plan will help to co-ordinate messaging from across the council and wider partnership and enable more formal measurement of impact. This again will be progressed in partnership with Community Planning Partners as we progress our Child Friendly City Plan.

3.5.3 Work is underway to increase the accessibility of information to families and staff, particularly around process and services to meet learners' needs. It is hoped that we can build on the digital developments made over the last few months to further enhance our Digital Hubs.

3.6   Implementation and monitoring

3.6.1 Overall progress will be monitored and reviewed through the Supporting Learners programme which makes regular updates to the Committee.

3.6.2 In accordance with legislation, the Accessibility Plan should be reviewed formally within three years and a report presented to the committee on progress.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Recommendations in the plan will make use of existing budgets.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The Local Authority has many legal duties including those of:
   - Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002
   - The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
   - The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
   - The Equality Act 2010
   - The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The approach being taken to develop the actions outlined in this Report will assist the Council to fulfil these duties more effectively, and secure necessary and appropriate education and additional support for our disabled children and young people and their parents and carers.

The Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan fulfils the Council's duty to prepare, implement and keep under review and accessibility strategy in accordance with the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A		
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial claims and legal challenge (reference to ASN tribunal, Disability Discrimination)	M	Mitigated by services developing understanding to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City working in partnership with learners and families.
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the needs of disabled children and young people and those with additional support needs.	L	Mitigated by offering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and Equality Act (2010)
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource	L	Mitigated by realigning services to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City.
Reputational	Risk of not achieving positive outcomes for disabled children and young people and their parents and carers	L	Potential changes to our provision and development of the school estate will enable early transition planning and intervention thereby reducing potential risk.
	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners and communication needs of their parents and carers	L	Development of a communications strategy to ensure shared planning and understanding.
Environment / Climate	N/A		

7. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Children who have their learning and wellbeing needs well met are more able to contribute to a prosperous economy. This requires schools to be well led.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals in this report seek to ensure the best use of resource in the system, promoting an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that appropriate and timely personalised support is available to them. Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Underpinning the work of all schools in Aberdeen City is achieving excellence and equity for all.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	This report takes into account the local authority's legal obligations in respect of the legislation below: Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 • Duty to prepare, implement and review and accessibility strategy. **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004** • Duties with regard to meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs. **The Equality Act 2010** • Duty to ensure we are not discriminating disabled learners **The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000** • Duty of education authority in providing school education • Raising standards • Requirement that education be provided in mainstream schools

	The National Improvement Framework
	• Education Authorities are under a duty to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of education of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them and to carry out the duty with a view to achieving the strategic priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10.   APPENDICES

Aberdeen City Council Accessibility Plan 2020-2023

11.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Schools Accessibility Plan

2020 – 2023

Draft August 2020

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Document Control

Approval Date:	
Implementation Date	
Document Number	
Document Author(s) and Owner	
Approval Authority	
Scheduled Review	V2 must be approved by Committee within three years.
Changes	N/A

1   Context

1.1   An Accessibility Plan ensures that long-term planning for disabled pupils meets the requirements of sections 1 to 3 of the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002.

1.2   In 2020 there were 503 pupils of school age assessed or declared as having a disability in Aberdeen City, representing 7.35% of pupils with additional support needs. Seventy-five percent of disabled pupils attend mainstream schools. This plan is focussed on improving access to education for all disabled pupils, both those who are declared disabled and attending schools and early learning and childcare settings and those who choose not to declare.

1.3   The Plan encompasses the vision for Aberdeen: 'a place where all people can prosper' and the values and objectives stated in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan

1.4   The Council has a range of documents to support improvement planning and decision making, this Plan should not be considered in isolation. The Schools Accessibility Plan aims to pull improvement activity together into one high level accessible document which can be used to support self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

1.5   This Schools Accessibility Plan will ensure that the Council continues to evaluate and focus on the three planning duties under the Act:
   ▪ Increasing disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum.
   ▪ Improving the physical environment of the schools, and other buildings where education is provided, to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services.
   ▪ Improving communication with disabled pupils and their parents and carers.

2   Disability Definition

2.1   The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes:
   ▪ Physical, including sensory impairment
   ▪ Mental impairment, including learning difficulties
   ▪ Impairments as a result of mental health issue, must have substantial, long term impact on day to day, but need not be recognised through NHS.

2.2   In addition, the following are also defined as disabilities:
   ▪ Cancer, HIV infection, Multiple Sclerosis
   ▪ Severe disfigurement
   ▪ Progressive conditions, eg muscular dystrophy, where the effect on ability to carry out day-to-day activities is not substantial but is likely to be so in the future.

2.3   The definition of disability may include what may be termed hidden disabilities such as dyslexia; autistic spectrum condition and speech and language impairments.

3 Key Legislation and Guidance

3.1 The [Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004](#) provides the legal framework for identifying and addressing the additional support needs of children and young people who face a barrier, or barriers, to learning including those who are disabled. The framework guides the provision of appropriate support to help them work towards achieving their full potential.

3.2 The [Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014](#) guides careful consideration of effective universal and targeted support following an assessment of wellbeing. The legislation recognises that many children require support from a range of different agencies.

3.3 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on a range of protected characteristics including disability. The Act sets out duties in relation to disabled pupils including the duty to make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled pupils. This Act also places Aberdeen City Council under a public sector equality duty which requires it, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to: eliminate prohibited conduct under the act; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristic and those who do not. This includes by removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by disabled pupils, taking steps to meet the needs of disabled pupils that are different from those without a disability, and encouraging disabled pupils to participate in public life or any other activity in which participation is disproportionately low.

3.4 The United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) will soon be incorporated into Scots Law. A recent [self-evaluation](#) of the extent to which Aberdeen City Council upholds and promotes children's rights and associated Child Friendly City Plan has proved a key source of information in developing this Plan.

"A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families" Article 23

"Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment." Article 29

4   The Self Evaluation Process

4.1   In addition to a review of legislation and guidance many hard data sources enabled the initial drafting of this Schools Accessibility Plan. Sources included:
- Self-evaluation against the UNCRC
- Themes identified from the Additional Support for Learning Review
- Data sets held by the Supporting Learners workstream
- Quality Improvement data from recent school visits
- School inspection reports
- Attainment data for children registered as disabled
- Population needs assessments
- Tribunal data
- Complaints
- Pupil surveys including surveys of wellbeing and children's rights
- Data held by Corporate Landlord

4.2   Data was holistically considered to help start to determine our position in regard to the three areas to be explored in this Plan. This enabled a series of themes to be drawn from the data for further exploration. A period of engagement took place with groups representing parents and carers of disabled children, disabled pupils and professionals who support children and families impacted by disability. There was a particular focus on qualitative data or softer data during this period of engagement. This approach ensured that we effectively balance quantitative and qualitative data sets and take a rounded view of our current state to help identify action for inclusion in the Schools Accessibility Plan.

5   Is the Curriculum Accessible for All Disabled Learners?

5.1   Data from learners, parents and quality improvement visits identifies that the curriculum is accessible for most, but further efforts are required to ensure that it is accessible to a minority of learners. In almost all cases the children and young people most at risk of not having an accessible curriculum have an individual plan (Individual Education Plan or Child's Plan) and some also have a Coordinated Support Plan. In some cases, planning does not sufficiently include the learner and isn't sufficiently differentiated. The Supporting Learners workstream will lead on developing improved consistency in this area.

5.2   In the best cases, school staff engage disabled learners in the planning process by encouraging pupils to consider themselves as a learner and asking the learner to identify (or show) interventions or approaches that work well for them. They also work with parents, carers and partners to identify and address accessibility needs. This is the standard expected across the City and will be a key focus of Quality Improvement visits over session 2020/2021.

5.3   The use of accessible technology such as Texthelp and Google tools is recognised as a strength. These enable disabled learners to personalise their support and access the curriculum as independently as possible. This resource should continue to be promoted alongside lower tech solutions so that individual needs are taken account of.

5.4   Effective curriculum design places the needs of disabled learners at the centre of a plan which is aspirational and allows access to flexible learning pathways and a range of qualification routes. Although there is some evidence of flexibility not being in place in a few cases, attainment measures for children with additional support needs in Aberdeen City

(and the subset of those who disclose a disability) are higher than both the virtual comparator and national average. The Quality Improvement Team will work with colleagues in Data and Insights to ensure that they are able to track the progress of children with a disability more easily through the use of Power BI.

5.5 Aberdeen City's four-year average positive destination figure is 90.68% and 84.88% for young people with additional support needs. The figure sits below the virtual comparator (88.54%) and national average (89.17%) and highlights a need to review post school transitions. Many parents do not identify their child as disabled and more work will be undertaken to cleanse the data to enable more effective reporting of disabled young people's destinations This will be aligned to the work of the LOIP to ensure maximum reach.

5.6 Parents of children with a disability ask that provision of high quality professional learning is made. This request also came through surveys previously reported to this Committee through the Supporting Learners Programme. This is being progressed at pace and a suite of professional learning has been developed by a range of partners (including CAHMS). Support groups have offered to help develop training that captures the lived experiences of disabled people and this will be built into our approaches.

5.7 Access to the curriculum is impacted when disabled learners are not in school. The total number of primary school exclusions is at a three year low. Exclusion levels across secondary schools vary significantly and a reduction is being supported through our Quality Improvement approaches, our Supporting Learners programme and a review of our Exclusion Policy and guidance. There is a need to ensure that staff have a solid understanding of the requirements of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) and the Equality Act 2010 and this will be built into our professional learning calendar.

5.8 Parents made reference to a lack of personalised support or range of extracurricular activities available for disabled children. Disabled children should be enabled to access to activities. There is evidence that better promotion, communication and making reasonable adjustments could help disabled children and young people access a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

5.9 The Independent Children's Rights Impact Assessment on the response to COVID-19 in Scotland indicates that many children and young people with additional support needs and/or disabilities have been unable to access adequate additional support for learning or teaching either in school or remotely. Feedback from parents across Aberdeen City is mixed with 81% reporting very good support whilst others feeling that digital support was less impactful with 6% wanting another form of learning, with similar responses from learners. The supports/adaptations available to disabled learners over the next few months will be carefully monitored through live data monitoring to inform the shaping of services around their needs.

5.10 Some groups of learners requiring additional support/reasonable adjustment will be impacted in the medium to long-term by the pandemic. Our curriculum needs to respond flexibly to the changing needs of our learners in the current context. Given this, our 2020-2021 quality improvement visits will seek to understand and support those impacted by COVID-19.

5.11 Resource is currently shaped around pre-defined categories of children and young people. This is limiting flexibility and the Supporting Learners Programme is looking at how best to develop a system which can analyse and predict trends to anticipate demand. This will help shape services and resource around the needs of disabled learners.

5.12 Services supporting children and young people with disabilities often place restrictions on accessing services (such as the need for an official diagnosis) and this should be reviewed urgently. Parents highlighted this as a significant concern and this will be addressed through the Supporting Learners programme.

5.13 Resource allocated across an Associated Schools Group can be highly effective although the collaboration and creativity required to allocate resource for maximum impact is not consistent. There is a need to share best practice in this area.

6 Can Everyone Access the Physical Environment?

6.1 Aberdeen City Council has invested heavily in the school estate over recent years and are committed to building four new schools. All new school buildings are fully wheelchair accessible and offer a level of flexibility.

6.2 34 schools (58%) are graded as A or B for suitability according to nationally agreed criteria and some have specialist resources. The remaining 25 buildings are graded as "C – Poor". Many of these are the oldest buildings in the estate, including nine Victorian buildings, the design and construction make it challenging to improve their suitability, often because they cannot easily be made fully accessible for those with limited mobility although it should be noted that accessibility is not limited to those with a physical disability.

6.3 Parents requested that consideration be given to widening our understanding of disability access. This should include an audit of school buildings looking at access for all disabilities not just physical disabilities and consideration of how needs can be met. This must include assessing spaces from a sensory (autistic) perspective and for those with sensory impairments by or with input from specialist services including, for example NHS. This approach will help identify how best to support our school building programme but also give an indication of how best to support when operating in a building with limited flexibility.

6.4 Learners identified that signage in school could be improved by being at an appropriate height and labelled inclusively. This will be fed into the review of the School Estate.

6.5 Accessibility will be a key driver in the upcoming review on the School Estate with delivery through the Condition and Suitability Programme.

7 Do Disabled Pupils Have Access to Information in a Timely Manner, which Takes Account of Disability and Meets their Communication Needs?

7.1 The recent local Child Friendly Cities Evaluation Report highlights key strengths including well-established participatory approaches and groups which enable most children and

young people to influence decision-making. It noted further work being required to ensure greater opportunities to influence a wider range of decisions that directly affect the lives of learners, including disabled learners, personally and at a city-wide level. This ability to influence decision making will be taken forward through the Child Friendly Cities Action Plan.

7.2   Most staff take positive and proactive steps to reduce communication barriers to the curriculum. 81% of our children and young people advised that information was easy to understand. Work is required to ensure that the 19% who reported that it wasn't easily understood are effectively catered for including the availability of information in alternative formats and supporting any necessary communication aids/technology provided to enable disabled learners to communicate effectively .

7.3   Further consideration and efforts need to be undertaken to ensure that communications from all services including health, justice, social services are accessible, easy-to-understand and user- friendly for disabled learners. The planned communication plan will help to co-ordinate messaging from across the council and wider partnership and enable more formal measurement of impact. This again will be progressed in partnership with Community Planning Partners as we progress our Child Friendly City Plan.

7.4   Work is underway to increase the accessibility of information to families and staff, particularly around process and services to meet disabled learners' needs. It is hoped that we can build on the digital developments made over the last few months to further enhance our Digital Hubs.

8   Review and Evaluation

8.1   The Implementation of this Plan will be monitored and reported to Committee through the Supporting Learners Programme.

8.2   Formal review of this Plan will take place after 30 months to ensure a new Plan is in place three years after completion of this one. This will ensure that we maintain a focus on improving outcomes for those who are disabled and meet our duties set out in the 2002 Act.

Action Plan to improve access to the curriculum:

What are our goals?	What will this achieve?	When will we do this by?	Who will make sure this happens?	How will we know our progress?
Improve awareness of legislation: ▪ Disability and Equality ▪ Additional support needs legislation ▪ Exclusion	Improve consistency of practice and build confidence and knowledge base of staff Reduce stigma in declaring a disability	June 2021	Building Capacity Team Supporting Learners Workstream	Attendance at professional learning and feedback Reduction in the number of associated complaints Reduction in the number of ASN Tribunal references Reduction in levels of exclusion of disabled pupils Increased number of children and young people declared disabled
Disabled learners use digital technology to increase access to the curriculum by increasing the provision of technology and use of accessible tools	Improve accessibility of the curriculum	Dec 2022	Raising Attainment Workstream Senior Leadership Teams	Increase in the provision of technology Quality Improvement Visits
Staff have an appropriate understanding of additional support needs of disabled pupils through a suite of professional learning opportunities at different levels	Increased confidence and knowledge base of a range of additional support needs and disabilities.	Dec 2022	Supporting Learners Programme Building Capacity Workstream	Feedback from Professional Learning Programme Quality of planning and practice Number of staff trained

Improve knowledge of and improve access to extra curricular activities for disabled learners	Improved access and uptake of activities outwith the school day	December 2023	Supporting Learners Workstream	Disabled Learner feedback Feedback from parents and carers of disabled pupils

Learners are supported to be fully involved in their own learning, planning and review.	More impactful plans	June 2021	School teams	Plans for learners
Improved transition planning for children with a disability All transitions: nursery to primary, primary to secondary, secondary to adult services.	Improved outcomes and destinations (Link with Economic Rescue Plan)	Dec 2023	Senior Leadership Team Skills Development Scotland Social work and other agencies	Positive destination data Learner feedback

Curriculum personalised to meet the needs of individual disabled learners including the provision of Locality Hubs with a particular focus on:
  ▪ Those with a disability
  ▪ Those impacted adversely by COVID-19 with a disability
	Reduction in exclusion of learners with a disability
	
	Increase in attainment Increase in the overall time learners access education
		June 2023	Senior Leadership Teams
			
			Supporting Learners Workstream
			
			Educational Psychology
				Reduction in exclusion Increase in engagement
				
				School leavers data for those with a disability

Action Plan to improve access to the physical environment:

What are our goals?	What will this achieve?	When will we do this by?	Who will make sure this happens?	How will we know our progress?
Augmentative and alternative signage at learner appropriate height Toilets signposted as accessible	Inclusion of those with disabilities, hidden and visible	June 2023	School Support Managers Senior Leadership Teams Corporate Landlord	Signage in buildings compliant
Involve disabled children, parents, specialists and services in the development of the school estate strategy, including nurseries and pre-school centres	Meet statutory duties, anticipate need and look forward to what is best practice	June 2021	Corporate Landlord Children and Family Services Allied Health Professionals	School estate strategy in place
Provide guidance on how to meet a range of needs (particularly sensory needs) when environments are not as flexible	Sensory needs being better met	June 2022	Supporting Learners Workstream	Individual plans for children and young people

Action Plan to improve communication and access to school information:

What are our goals?	What will this achieve?	When will we do this by?	Who will make sure this happens?	How will we know our progress?
Information regarding additional support need is meaningful, relevant and readily available in variety of formats or language	Learners use the form of communication which suits. Everyone can access and understand information	Dec 2023	Senior Leadership Teams Children and Family Services Child Friendly City Project group	Parents and carers/children and young people and staff report improvement in the quality of information being shared
Establishment of Digital Hub as a one stop shop for all information for all stakeholders	Improve staff awareness of digital technology and accessibility for all	June 2022	Supporting Learners Workstream Digital Depute	Hits to the Digital Hub Quality Improvement visits
Information gathered and shared directly ASN Parent forum	Partnership with parents to share and inform practice Appropriate format agreed – to include virtual meetings	Dec 2022	Children and Family Services	Feedback from participants

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