

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

COMMITTEE: **Education and Children's Services**

DATE: **2 December 2014**

DIRECTOR: **Gayle Gorman**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Inclusion Review and Project Governance**

REPORT NUMBER: **ECS/14/060**

CHECKLIST COMPLETED: **Yes**

---

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Committee on the findings and recommendations of the Inclusion Review.
- 1.2 This report outlines and seeks approval for the proposed Project Governance structures for implementing the recommendations from the Inclusion Review.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
  - (i) Note the recommendations of the Inclusion Review which are contained within Appendix 1 of this report;
  - (ii) Instruct officers to implement the recommendations of the Inclusion Review.
  - (iii) Approve the proposed Project Governance structure for oversight of the implementation.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no long-term financial implications associated with the recommendations above, the move in practice will support our making more effective use of budgets already within the service budget.

Professional Learning costs can be met from existing service budgets which have had an allocation assigned for this purpose. Therefore there are no savings linked to this proposal.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Legal**

Officers will work closely with Legal Services to ensure that the planned roll out of the Inclusion Review takes account of the rights of parents and learners within legislation.

#### **4.2 Resources**

Officer time and expenditure associated with the Inclusion Review will be met from existing service budgets.

#### **4.3 Personnel**

Implementation of the recommendations will not result in any significant personnel implications. A sharpening of staff's inclusive skills will be delivered and consideration of how best to use expertise already available in the City to benefit a wider group of learners will result.

Pupil Support Assistants will be able to benefit from a career structure, which will acknowledge and reward highly skilled practitioners.

A new post of Inclusion Co-ordinator within schools will be established to help support colleagues in schools and services in implementing the recommendations.

#### **4.4 Property**

There are no property implications arising from the implementation of these proposals although consideration may have to be given on how best to use available spaces flexibly to support learners with a range of Additional Support Needs.

#### **4.5 Equipment**

There are no equipment implications although schools will be provided with guidance on suitable resources to support learners with a range of needs. The costs of these will be met from existing service budgets.

#### **4.6 Sustainability and environmental**

Implementation of these proposals will increase sustainability and enable schools to be more responsive to the ever-changing needs of the school community.

It is anticipated that transportation and associated costs will be reduced over time as more pupils are educated in their local school.

#### **4.7 Health and safety**

There are no implications or risks related to this report other than the requirement to improve guidance on how best to support learners exhibiting challenging behaviour.

We will ensure that any changes made as a result of implementing the findings from the Inclusion Review conform with Disability Legislation.

## **4.8 Policy**

A range of policies will be reviewed in light of progressing the recommendations from the Inclusion Review; all policies will be in keeping with the authority Learning and Teaching policy. Policies to be revised include:

- Managing Challenging Behaviour: Risk Assessment
- Managing Challenging Behaviour: Preventing Exclusion
- Managing Challenging Behaviour: Improving Attendance and Punctuality
- Managing Challenging Behaviour: Anti-Bullying Policy

A suite of policies/guidance on supporting and nurturing learners will require to be written and will include:

- Supporting learners who are Gifted and Talented
- Supporting learners on the Autistic Spectrum
- Supporting learners with an Attachment Disorder
- Supporting learning by using the 5 roles of Support for Learning

## **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

### **5.1 Background to the Inclusion Review**

Officers, supported by independent consultants have concluded an extensive review of inclusive practices across schools and services. The review focused on all learners in Aberdeen, not only children who are in need of additional support. The reviewers considered the extent to which the service complies with legislation and best practice, thus establishing to what extent the Council supports social justice through inclusive educational practices.

Key legislative considerations included the extent to which the City had moved towards a presumption of mainstreaming in line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000), adherence to the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 which recognised wider groups of learners as being in need of additional support and how routinely we made 'reasonable adjustments' in line with the Equality Act (2010) in respect of disabled learners.

The independent consultants, both of whom are held in high regard nationally, visited all Secondary, Special Schools and Services and around half of the city's Primary schools.

Interviews were held with Elected Members, parents, pupils, colleagues from central functions within Education Services, practitioners and managers in schools.

Policies, reports and guidance were reviewed spanning the last 20 years to ensure that the reviewers could understand how the continuum of provision in Aberdeen City had evolved.

The reviewers have provided the Council with 16 recommendations based on triangulated evidence. Full implementation of the 16 recommendations has the potential to place Aberdeen in an enviable position in terms of inclusion both nationally and internationally.

The recommendations are outlined in appendix 1.

## **5.2 Findings from the Inclusion Review**

The reviewers found pockets of innovative and inclusive practice that can be used to disseminate best practice and enhance the experiences of all Aberdeen's children.

Many senior managers have approaches in place that result in acceptance and inclusion and encourage creative approaches to meeting learning needs. Some schools have creatively developed more enhanced provisions, based on sound analysis of data, to offer targeted support. The most effective provisions have redesigned their support systems by effectively planning for the varying needs of pupils across the school and, as a result the provisions are already delivering excellent inclusive experiences and are flexible in their approach to meeting learning needs.

Many schools use solution-focused approaches and collaborate with a range of partners to offer timely personalised pathways to meet changing needs. This approach really enables learners to reach their potential and prepares them well for positive destinations.

The reviewers witnessed a high level of commitment from staff in all positions and praised how well staff had engaged with this Review of Inclusion.

Presumption of mainstreaming, as outlined in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act, 2000, was not fully understood and applied in all schools and services. As a City we are not fully utilising inclusive practices to shape tolerant communities in our promotion of social justice.

The unusually high numbers of specialist provision and cumbersome referral processes limits the flexibility of systems and development of a smooth continuum of provision required to be truly inclusive. Children travel long distances to access appropriate support which could be provided immediately and locally. Provision and services were designed for the most part, twenty years ago, and have not been reviewed to take account of changes in legislation and best practice. The 'labelling' of provisions has resulted in unhelpful language being used to describe children with additional support needs and child first language should be adopted to rectify this. Further movement towards a presumption of mainstreaming will support schools to take greater ownership of learning needs within their school community, rather than perceive that access to another provision across the City is the only means of supporting individuals in need of additional support.

Ways of working should be considered in light of current research and best practice so that schools and services are able to respond to a wider group of learning needs immediately. This would ensure that children access the support they need without the delay of fitting into referral processes, awaiting vacant places and traveling long distances resulting in their missing out on the wider life and ethos of the school. This approach would also equip staff working in schools with the training and expertise to support all learners in the city, many groups of children with additional support needs may not have been recognised in the past.

The reviewers believe that the allocation of staff resource and access to appropriate buildings and Information Technology should be considered carefully in light of the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that all schools are able to make the 'reasonable adjustments' required by legislation. Staff resource should be allocated dependant upon need rather than the Scottish Multiple Index of Deprivation (SIMD).

More established partnership working with partners and the third sector, along with sharing and offering training and guidance on best practice would enable local schools to intervene appropriately in a timely manner. Streamlined arrangements for planning would also be beneficial to free up time to support learners.

Monitoring of some vulnerable groups, such as children who are looked after and those presenting challenging behaviour, should be considered carefully to improve early intervention, increase achievement based on sound analysis of effective interventions and ultimately positive destinations.

The reviewers believe that we should seize the opportunity to redesign our approach to supporting learners with additional support needs. It should be designed around current legislation and best practice as this will help ensure that more responsive and flexible approaches are utilised. In turn this would enable the Council to be better placed to continue to meet the changing needs of Aberdeen's learners.

*As we move our service provision towards a presumption of mainstreaming, where almost all children will be attending their local school and accessing the supports at the point of need in a timely manner, we will continue to have some elements of specialist provision for those children most in need of complex specialist support. This is demonstrated in our commitment to developing a new centre of excellence to support children with severe and complex needs, to replace the former Raeden, Woodlands and Hazlewood Schools which will operate on a hub and satellite basis.*

*By following the recommendations of the Inclusion Review the Council ensures that we are adhering to national legislation and responding to international research on best practice.*

Members will be aware through briefings that we have been able to act on some of the recommendations within the report. We appointed an Inclusion Implementation Manager in August 2014 to oversee the implementation. We have been successful in recruiting a new Head of Service for Inclusion (preferred candidate status offered and accepted on 10 November 2014) and we have recruited two Service Managers for Inclusion to replace vacancies in the team (30 October 2014).

In addition the Inclusion Implementation Manager has been working with stakeholders to agree an Inclusion statement which sets out our vision for Inclusion (attached as appendix 2).

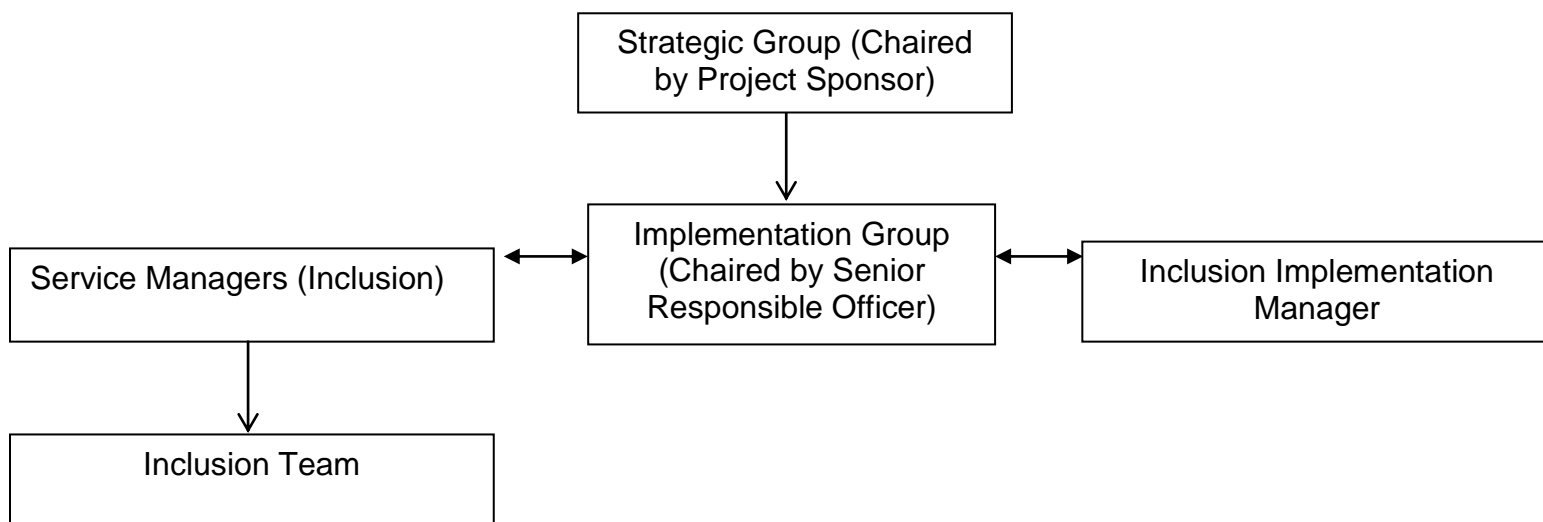
There have been a number of other areas of progress which we have acted on quickly following the reports. These are mostly in the areas of process, systems and controls which were identified as areas we should address immediately.

Full details of the recommendations are available in appendix 1.

### 5.3 Project Governance

Transformational change requires that decisions can be made quickly and responsively. It is important that we place a structured governance approach to oversee implementation of the recommendations. This will provide a robust and transparent structure, which will stand up to internal and external scrutiny.

### 5.4 Governance Structure



### 5.5 Key Roles and Responsibilities

Key Role	Responsibilities
<b>1. Project Sponsor</b>  <b>Director of Education and Children's Services</b>	To champion the project  To Chair the Strategic Group  Promote delivery of the project, politically and at strategic level with partner organisations  Liaison with Elected members regarding high level project delivery  Liaison with other project sponsors  Approve budget and agree tolerances  Ensure resolution of issues escalated up by Senior Responsible Officer/Inclusion Implementation Manager
<b>2. Senior Responsible Officer</b>	Directs the project  Chairs the Implementation Group

<p><b>Head Service (Inclusion)</b></p>	<p><b>Of</b></p> <p>Proactive leadership and direction throughout the project</p> <p>Has the ultimate authority and responsibility for successful completion of the project</p> <p>Accountable for the delivery of planned benefits associated with the project</p> <p>Responsible for liaising with and influencing key stakeholders</p> <p>Approves budget and agrees tolerances</p> <p>Ensures availability of essential project resources</p> <p>Ensures resolution of issues escalated by the Inclusion Implementation Manager</p> <p>Delegates tasks to Project Implementation Group members and ensures delivery</p>
<p><b>3. Project Manager</b></p> <p><b>Inclusion Implementation Manager</b></p>	<p>Develops and maintains a detailed project plan</p> <p>Prepares the team plan and agrees it with the Senior Responsible Officer</p> <p>Produces Status Reports to the Strategic Group</p> <p>Works alongside the Service Managers (Inclusion) to plan, monitor and manage the implementation of the plan</p> <p>Identifies and advises the Senior Responsible Officer of any risks associated with the project</p> <p>Advises the Senior Responsible Officer of any deviations from the plan and recommends corrective action.</p> <p>Works in partnership with the Service Managers (Inclusion) to recruit project staff and consultants</p> <p>Manages coordination of partners and working groups engaged in project work</p> <p>Manages project deliverables in line with the project plan</p> <p>Works in collaboration with the Service Managers (Inclusion) to mitigate risks, resolve issues and escalates them where necessary</p> <p>Manages project evaluation and dissemination activities</p> <p>Monitors project progress and performance</p> <p>Manages project training within defined budget</p>

	<p>Represents the interests of end users</p> <p>Shares service specific in-depth knowledge</p> <p>Ensures that the project fits with the overall strategy of the service</p> <p>Ensures planned changes to the service are feasible and sustainable</p> <p>Ensures adequate testing and feedback are provided</p> <p>Presents all relevant risks and issues to the Strategic Group</p> <p>Ensures Project Plan is followed, updated and amended with unexpected developments</p> <p>Provides a link between Strategic and Implementation Group</p> <p>Ensures project documentations are up to date and circulated to Strategic and Implementation Group prior to meetings</p>
<p><b>4. Service Managers (Inclusion)</b></p>	<p>Manage daily operations in schools and services</p> <p>Collaborate with the Inclusion Implementation Manager to ensure strategy and operations are in line</p> <p>Explore innovative approaches to the removal of barriers to learning</p> <p>Provides operational feedback to the Inclusion Implementation Manager regarding how strategic developments will transfer operationally</p>
<p><b>5. Inclusion Team</b></p>	<p>Under the direction of the Service Manager (Inclusion), support schools and services to implement changes in practice</p> <p>Escalate any potential difficulties to the Service Managers (Inclusion)</p> <p>Facilitate training as appropriate</p> <p>Model inclusive practices to support colleagues in schools and services</p> <p>Represent the views of the Inclusion Team at relevant meetings when deemed appropriate</p> <p>Support the development of practical guidance to support schools and services</p>



<b>6. Strategic Group</b>
<b>Membership</b>
<p>Chaired by The Director of Education and Children's Services</p> <p>Include the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Representative from the NHS, Head Of Service (Inclusion), Head of Service (Education), Third Sector Partners and Inclusion Implementation Manager</p> <p>Convenor and/or Vice Convenor of Education and Children's Services.</p>
<b>Meeting Protocol</b>
<p>The Group shall agree attendance at meetings, and any other appointments to the Strategic Group</p> <p>The Strategic Group shall meet at least once a term</p> <p>The Strategic Group will receive regular Status Reports from the Inclusion Implementation Manager</p> <p>The members of the Strategic Group can be represented by substitutes but only the Project Sponsor/Senior Responsible Officer can fulfil the Sponsor's role</p> <p>The Strategic Group is not a democracy; it is led by the Senior Responsible Officer</p>
<b>Remit</b>
<p>Directs the project, ensures the project supports the strategy of the service and the strategy of the Council.</p> <p>Considers the views of the key stakeholders and manages their influence in the project</p> <p>Monitors the quality of the output of the project, including sustainability</p> <p>Mitigates risks and resolves issues which could not be managed at Implementation level</p> <p>Supports the project Sponsor/Senior Responsible Officer and the Inclusion Implementation Manager in delivering the project</p>

<b>7. Implementation Group</b>
<b>Membership</b>
<p>Chaired by The Head of Service (Inclusion) or the Inclusion Implementation Manager</p> <p>Includes the Inclusion Implementation Manager, Service Managers (Inclusion), representatives from Primary, Secondary and Additional Supports Needs Provision</p> <p>Representatives from the Inclusion Team, NHS and Third Sector Representatives to join at the request of the Group.</p>
<b>Meeting Protocol</b>
<p>The Group shall agree attendance at meetings, and any other appointments to the Strategic Group</p> <p>The Implementation Group shall meet at least six times a year</p>

The Group will receive regular Status Reports from the Inclusion Implementation Manager

Members of the Group will provide updates on areas they lead on

The Group will be action driven and accountable for delivery of areas of the project delegated to them.

Represent the views of colleagues in respective sectors

Consult with colleagues regarding draft policies, procedures and guidance to ensure timely implementation

### **Remit**

Considers the views of stakeholders and manages their influence in the project

Monitors the quality of the output of the project

Shape guidance to schools and services by being solution orientated in approach and having considered documents circulated in line with agreed timescales

Supports the Inclusion Implementation Manager in delivering the project by ensuring colleagues across schools and services are represented

## **6. IMPACT**

### **6.1 Corporate**

**Single outcome agreement** – the Single Outcome Agreement defines how practices across the city should change through proactive partnership working. The agreement states that partners will:

- Make a decisive shift from reactive problem solving to root cause prevention;
- Capitalise on Aberdeen’s existing strengths to build sustainable positive outcomes;
- Make significant progress towards the radical collaboration required to meet the long-term social and financial challenges.

These practices are mirrored in the recommendations of the Inclusion Review where the focus is on effective partnership working and early intervention.

Moving to more proactive approaches will ensure that our learners have access to the right support at the right time and are able to maximise their potential.

Successful inclusive practices support social justice for individuals with Additional Support Needs and potentially enable some of our vulnerable learners to live and work within supportive local communities.

## 6.2 Service Improvement Plan

Implementation of the findings of the Inclusion Review will support our delivery against three key priorities within the Service Improvement Plan:

1. **Accelerate progress to improve learning outcomes for specific underperforming groups – in particular Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs (ASN), Literacy and Adults**
2. **Improve Health and Wellbeing outcomes – through more people being more active more often and improved mental health and resilience**
3. **Improve and increase positive and sustained destinations for 14-25 year olds**

Implementation of the findings from the Inclusion Review will go far to helping us achieve these key priorities.

## 6.3 Public

This report is likely to be of some interest to the public as they are guided to appreciate the benefits of inclusive practices and help shape new ways of supporting our learners. In particular, those families with children and young people with Additional Support Needs will be greatly interested in the recommendations of the Inclusion Review.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Not moving to a presumption of mainstreaming places us in a vulnerable position, as we are not fully complying with legislation. The Additional Support for Learning Act recognises a wider group of children as being in need of additional support and we need to develop a culture of innovative support to support an ever-changing pupil population. Not responding to these changes in society has the potential to lead to a deskilled workforce.

Staff in schools will be asked to support a greater range of learning needs and will require the support of the Inclusion Team, access to quality training and supporting policies and guidance. The team will need to empower colleagues in school to innovate in order to meet individual needs.

Colleagues in schools will be more able to support the changes if they feel involved in the process and there will be routine opportunities to feed into implementation plans and key documents. This will ensure that plans take account of operational pressures and are more likely to be successful.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Review was conducted within the framework of Scottish Government legislation and national guidance, which is summarised below.

- **The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act, 2000** (Section 15) came into effect in August 2003 and introduced what is now referred to as **'the presumption of mainstreaming'**. This means that the onus is on education authorities to place children,

including those with the range of additional support needs, in a mainstream school. Exceptions to this presumption are described as follows:

- When education in a school other than a special school would not be suited to the ability or the aptitude of the child;
  - When placement in mainstream would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom the child is being educated, or would result in unreasonable public expenditure.
- 
- Following the introduction of **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004**, 'the **new concept of additional support needs** refers to any child or young person who, for whatever reason, requires additional support for learning. Additional support needs can arise from any factor which causes a barrier to learning, whether that factor relates to social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, disability, or family and care circumstances and learning environment'. The change in wording from special educational needs to additional support needs signals a general recognition that very many children or young people will have additional support needs at some stage in their school career.
  
  - **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended in 2009)** strengthens parental rights and **places more duties and responsibilities on local authorities**. It requires Scottish Ministers to secure the provision of an advocacy service to be available on request and free of charge to support parents and young people in Tribunal proceedings. And, it provides that the Education Authority is required to make arrangements for the **provision of independent mediation services** which cannot include in-house mediation services.
  
  - **The Equality Act**, which took effect in October 2010, places a duty on public authorities to have due regard to three specified matters when exercising their functions, namely eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic e.g. race, sex, disability and those persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
  
  - The Equality Act introduced a new legislative framework setting out schools' obligations to prevent discrimination and disadvantage in schools. It introduced a new concept of discrimination arising from disability and re-stated the duty on schools and authorities to make reasonable adjustments where disabled pupils face substantial disadvantage in accessing education and every aspect of school life.. Disability discrimination claims may now be made to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal for Scotland.
  
  - Scottish Government's vision for children and young people to be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, included, respected and responsible can be achieved most effectively through integrated working across all relevant services and agencies, as described within **Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)** and promotes improved outcomes for children and young people, as a result of **effective partnership working**.
  
  - **'Curriculum for Excellence'** aims to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a **coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18**. The curriculum includes the **totality of experiences** which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated.'

- Aberdeen City working vision of inclusive practice, 'Including all Aberdeen's Children' September 2014

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

Eleanor Sheppard, Inclusion Implementation Manager

E-mail [esheppard@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:esheppard@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Tel 01224 522707