



Appendix D

Response

Behaviour Report for Education and Children Services Committee

Current demands presented to ACC from “enough is enough” stop abuse in schools campaign

Demands For Action to Tackle Violence in Schools

- Staff-centred Risk Assessments dedicated to all Staff for Violence Assault and Abuse in the Workplace.
- Acknowledgement from Management that Abuse in the workplace exists and is an Issue.
- Regular Health and Safety Toolbox Talks within the workplace regarding any workplace health and safety issue.
- De-escalation Training for all School Staff.
- Sufficient dedicated time for Health and Safety Training.
- Regular quarterly Safety Meetings with TU representatives and management at all workplaces.
- Action Contingency Plans in place for the escalation of workplace safety issues or where mitigations in risk assessments cannot be met.
- Employees involved, consulted, engaged with about written information and findings regarding any Investigation of workplace incidents in which they are involved.
- Clear Policy for Staff regarding Assault, Violence and Abuse in the Workplace.
- Clear Procedure for supporting the employee who has been a victim of abuse without any implied fault or blaming such as the use terms like “what can you do better?”
- Respect and support employees who wish to report assaults to Police Scotland.
- Treat all employees with dignity and respect and ensure all line managers personally engage with employees who are absent from work.

- All pupils within ASN provision and any pupil where challenging behaviour is developing must have a Pupil Centred Risk Assessment.
- Staff should not be expected to work with any pupil where the staff member has any concern for their own personal safety.
- The council is woefully short of provision of specialist settings within the school estate. The school estate programme has no recognition of this need, which implies ACC is happy for increasing numbers of high tariff young people to be placed in mainstream with all the associated risks and shortcomings this entails. To remedy this, the council should implement a working group to review specialist provision within the city and feed their findings into the School Estate programme.

ACC Education has engaged with the GMB regarding these demands which has resulted in the creation of the an action plan.

There are positive actions coming out of this plan which the GMB support, namely the development of a Generic Staff Risk Assessment, which links to Pupil Centred Risk Assessments and is reflective of all the actions developed within the scope of the plan and our demands presented. This will be the golden thread which ties all the health and safety elements together with the focus of a transparent and positive health and safety culture for employees within education reducing any ambiguity and fragmentation.

The other main positive is the reintroduction of the exemplar School Health and Safety Policy. This is a welcomed element in developing a positive safety culture and will help develop staff engagement at a local level. It has to be noted that this exemplar will require to be consulted and developed further tweaks with all parties.

These 2 elements contained within the action plan will go along way in meeting 93% of the demands which have been made by our members.

The final demand which has not been itemised with the plan and report is the implementation of a working group to review specialist ASN provision within the city. This is primarily connected to the concerns of members due to the increased demands and outcomes that inclusion can have in mainstream settings. It is not a scenario where the union is demanding that learners should not be included within mainstream, it's the impact that this can have when the environment, design, training, resources and staffing, do not meet the needs of the individual learner and where these short falls in resource results in support staff being unsupported.

The ethos within schools is a positive one focused on supporting learners where everybody within the setting is doing the best they can to make things work, however, this enthusiasm can result in issues being deprioritised for the larger picture.

Example of such situations is when a learner is introduced to a setting which has not been designed for the individual, where toilet facilities, changing facilities and lifting equipment have not been considered resulting in staff working in unsuitable conditions which is of no benefit for the staff member or the learner. There is a wider specialist knowledge in design and safety principles that need to be considered in the assessment.

Other design factors are also the environment, where there isn't sufficient space, areas or facilities available within the setting to support the learner where there is a need for such consideration, to regulate behaviour or focus on a particular task. It's unacceptable to expect support staff to support learners 1 to 1 in make shift spaces where there is a likelihood of dysregulated behaviour occurring.

It is also important that staffing is sufficient in terms of numbers, support and training in mainstream settings. The future demands of the estate need to be assessed for the right reasons. The union appreciates that such expectations come at a cost and funds within the city are limited, however the current and future demands need to be assessed so the required funding from central government can be requested with all the required supporting evidence. We are surprised that the council has not grasped such a transparent demand. Any failings in this will result in pressure put on our members and they will ultimately be left to pick up the pieces and in some cases, the members protected rights under equalities will be ignored due to the needs of the service, this is an unacceptable position.

We are not suggesting that ACC is responsible for this but would appreciate acknowledgment that these areas need to be reviewed and solutions sought, which may mean lobbying the Scottish Government.

The Union will continue working in collaboration with ACC for this purpose, to primary support our members and consequently equally, the learners of Aberdeen City.

You can't get it right for each child if your not getting it right for the staff supporting that child.

Recent shared March figures would indicate that there has been 103 incidents relating to physical assault, 41 to externalising behaviour and 17 to unacceptable behaviour.

Regardless of the classification of incident the facts remain that most incidents are attributed to behavioural issues.

The GMB appreciates the historic working relationship between Education and would say it has always been respectable, productive and open. Unfortunately incidents in schools have increased and more focused action is required. The Union is hopeful that this exercise will generate positive results and will evidence that ACC is actively engaging with the issue.

Ultimately, the Union only wishes for Aberdeen to evidence the best practise for our members and set a high bench mark for other authorities to aim for.