

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer

Educational Services Committee: 13th December 2023

Subject: Services for Children, Young People and Families Update Report

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is:

- a) to inform Educational Services Committee of progress on supports to children, young people and families.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members of the Educational Services Committee are asked to:

- a) Note progress on plans to continue developing and improving supports.

3. Background

3.1 In January 2019 a national review of the implementation of Additional Support for Learning began. The subsequent report and action plan had nine key themes which set standards nationally, locally and at establishment level.

3.2 The national report recommends that local authorities must take account of the findings of the report to review and align their quality assurance processes. This must drive improvements in processes, practice and outcomes at all levels in the system.

3.3 West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) is committed to ensuring all children and young people are enabled to progress through Early Learning and School with the support they need.
When this support is more or different to what is generally provided for children and young people of the same age, then the child or young person is said to have additional needs.

3.4 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 lists four interrelated factors which individually or jointly impact on ability to learn:

- Learning Environment
- Family Circumstances
- Disability or Health
- Social or Emotional Factors

Additional support may be required throughout a child or young person's

educational journey: others may only require additional support for a short period of time.

- 3.5** It is recognised that children, young people and families are best supported through effective multi-agency planning and delivery of services. Educational Services work in collaboration with a range of council, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and third sector colleagues to support our families. This work is being developed via the Whole Family Wellbeing planning, led by Educational Services on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** There are currently 12, 226 school pupils in West Dunbartonshire Council. 5281 Pupils have Additional Support Needs (ASN) (43%), supported mainly in mainstream schools. Approximately 241 pupils are supported in our specialist settings as they require a more specific learning environment. We also have a small percentage of our children and young people with additional support needs supported by day or residential providers in external placements. These often involve young people separated from their peers and their community and can be expensive in comparison to supporting in-house. These costs have increased significantly over the past few years due to increased salaries and increased charges from partner providers for the range of specialist supports offered. This has resulted in budget overspends and it is anticipated that there might be mitigation of these to some extent by the strategy implementation.

Our ASN Estate consists of:

- 1 all through setting for 0-18 years supporting learners with complex ASN
- 2 Secondary Bases
- 4 Primary Bases

- 4.2** In response to projected needs in the secondary school estate, work is underway to expand the Kilpatrick School Campus with three additional classrooms. The provision of temporary modular classrooms has been undertaken and young people have transitioned to these. The planned building extension work is due to be undertaken later in school session 2022/23 has been delayed. Officers are currently exploring costs of potential longer term solutions.
- 4.3** Plans to re-develop the former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) to create a school for severe and complex learners, are progressing well. Officers have finalised layout plans in collaboration with Asset Management and clarity around services provision has been agreed. There is delay in progress due to building warrant issues. Work on developing Phase two of the Choices Building is due to start at the end of November 2023.
- 4.4** Education Leaders have collaborated to identify key areas of development and focus for Year 3 of the Additional Support Needs (ASN) Strategy. Work streams will continue to be underpinned by the National Improvement

Framework and focus on developing the capacity of all staff to best meet the needs of individual children and young people. We recognise from our survey of parents that they too need help supporting their children. Planned work with our partners in HSCP will enhance the programme of parenting supports being established and delivered via the West Dunbartonshire For Family Hubs which are being piloted using funding from Scottish Government.

4.5 Notable progress is as follows:

Inclusive Practices

- Year 3 of the implementation of the Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE) has begun. All schools have a nominated Champion who attends termly training and support sessions which further develop their knowledge and understanding. Almost all report that CIRCLE implementation is developing within their school settings. Reviews of the impact of the sessions on school staff and practice, inform us that most schools stated inclusive practises had improved in their setting from using CIRCLE and that both the Circle Inclusive Classroom Scale and the Child Participation scale has had a positive impact on learners.
- A Transition Policy for P1 children has been developed and shared with all Early Years and Primary establishments. This will help ensure consistent transition processes for all pupils and particularly those who need an enhanced transition into mainstream settings. This year there will be further development of a Transition Policy for Primary to Secondary schools. In addition a multi-agency working group is reviewing transition processes to support our children and young people with additional needs as they move to adult services and life beyond school.
- Our SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Supports) Champions from across all specialist setting continue to meet termly to progress the consistent implementation of the approach, share practical strategies and enhance collaborative working; building upon vital communication and emotional regulation skills being developed in each setting.
- Throughout the sessions specialist setting staff will continue to develop inclusive practices and provide opportunities to learn with and from others through our shared collegiate calendar. Future plans will support leaders in collaborating to create and deliver case study developments for use at the May In-Service Conference. This will enable all settings the opportunity to learn from each other and share good practice in the range of ways SCERTS has positively impacted on: their own professional skills and confidences in meeting learners' needs, the engagement of parents and carers with SCERTS and the impact of SCERTS on learners experience and improved outcomes.

Assessment and Moderation

Representatives from all specialist setting have engaged in Moderation planning events with colleagues from across the West Partnership. This activity is an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations within the learning, teaching and assessment cycle for

our learners with complex additional support needs. The cohort of staff involved are from across the West Partnership authorities and in comparable specialist settings. Within WDC specialist settings a similar model of Moderation activity is underway across all specialist settings to increase collaboration and confidence around assessment and moderation practice across the ASN Sector.

- In line with our ASN Strategy all specialist setting teaching staff and leaders have engaged in the BSquared Tracking Toolkit Professional Learning. Evaluations demonstrate that all staff rated the quality of the professional learning activity as *good* or *very good*, with all staff stating that their confidence and knowledge regarding tracking for children with ASN had increased as a result of this learning. The BSquared Tracking toolkit is now being fully implemented across all specialist setting to ensure a more consistent and robust approach to tracking progress, achievement and attainment as well as identifying next steps in learning. A strategic group is leading this work and consistent and shared approaches to implementation across settings as well as supporting colleagues within their own establishment. To date one establishment has utilised this toolkit within their review processes and received very positive feedback regarding confidence in being able to detail progress and evidence of progress in learning for our pupils with the most complex needs.

- **Learners' Experiences**

Recently pupils in the Vale of Leven Communication Base pupils engaged in a three day residential trip to Ardentinn Outdoor Centre. Fifteen pupils ranging from S2 - S6 participated in a variety of challenging outdoor experiences including archery, climbing, abseiling and canoeing. Through a variety of group challenges set, the pupils strengthened their teamwork and communication skills. The pupils had a fun, social experience whilst engaging in activities that clearly challenged them in developing a range of social and emotional skills. Leaders within the school stated that the pupils were an 'absolute credit' and had all benefitted greatly from the experience.

- 4.6** The WD for Families Hubs have now launched and are staffed by skilled outreach workers who can support families in accessing appropriate supports in a timely way, in their local communities. The Hub Outreach workers are currently delivering group and individual work with parents /carers, children and young people on a range of themes including: sleep, toileting, behaviour supports as well as stress and anxiety. These themes have been identified via our current Request for Parenting Support processes. These referrals have come from a range of partners including, Social Work, General Practitioners, Health Visitors, Community Link Workers, Paediatric Specialists, Educational Psychologists and HT's. This group of staff currently support approximately 90 families on a 1 to 1 or in a group capacity offering parental support. (App.1 WD for families Hub Programme)

A key partner in the WD for Families Hubs is the HSCP Neurodevelopmental Team (ND) which support families one day per week in each of the Hub locations. The ND Team deliver group and individual work with carers, children and young people, who are currently waiting on a neurodevelopmental assessment or have recently received a diagnosis.

- Over summer 2023 a programme of drop in sessions was undertaken across the three Hubs, providing an opportunity for families to liaise with ND staff to gain appropriate supports whilst waiting for their child's assessment, or for families who already have a diagnosis to gain further help. Over 800 parents and carers were contacted directly and invited to the drop in session across the summer by the health care team. Approximately 300 families attended. The information and data gathered was used to develop a programme of support from the ND Team for families across the following themes: sensory support, behaviour support, anxiety support, toileting support, sleep support and support around restricted eating. In addition this team supported approximately 55 families during the October week within the Hubs as well as play opportunities in Levensgrove Park.
- To develop our Workforce and Culture we have offered multi-agency professional learning to all staff. These sessions will develop a holistic workforce approach to supporting families on the ND Pathways.
- A very positive addition to the programme planned has been the work of Tanya Tennent who is an individual with lived experience of ASD, ADHD and Sensory Processing Disorder. She has and will continue to deliver a range of sessions which build capacity and knowledge in: understanding and supporting executive dysfunction, understanding and supporting sensory needs and understanding anxiety and distressed behaviour. All sessions to date have been very well attended by parents, carers and staff and feedback has been very positive.

4.7 The newly produced 'Seeking Help' leaflet for children and young people providing information and support on where to seek help if they have any child protection and/or safeguarding concerns has been shared widely within Education, Social Work and community partners. The leaflet was created by our young people for our young people in West Dunbartonshire therefore the information contained in the fully inclusive leaflet is what the group felt was most relevant and of best support to them. The design group comprised a range of pupils at different stages of secondary school who had varied life experiences as well as a range of Additional Support Needs. Next steps include the launch of poster campaign to further broaden and embed the implementation of the new resource to coincide with the upcoming festive holiday period.

4.8 The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Programme uses a unique, creative, bystander approach, giving young people the chance to explore and challenge attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence and all types of bullying and abuse. Four of the authorities secondary schools have participated in MVP staff training this session and school leads plan to establish MVP School Mentor Support Teams in the next session.

Young people in each school will be trained as peer mentors and deliver MVP sessions to their younger peers exploring issues such as: online bullying, domestic abuse, sharing of images and consent. By December 2023 all high schools will have participated in training and will have Support Teams in place.

- 4.9** The appointment of a Children's Rights Officer has taken place which will support our service and others in ensuring the voices of our children and young people will be heard and their Rights upheld across the community planning partnership. Guidance and professional learning offered will support services in safeguarding and enshrining children's rights in policy making, decision making and day to day practice. It will also support understanding of the need for and range of ways in which children and young people can and should be involved and included in decision making. (App.2 WDC Children's Rights sites)

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications as a direct result of this report. However it should be noted that in line with the recommendations in the ASN Review we must ensure we have a well-trained, high quality workforce who are equipped to support the range of needs and rights of our children and young people.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** £0.3m of funding was allocated for ASN provision at Educational Services Committee on 11 March 2020. Additional budget will be required to deliver Kilpatrick ASN provision and once anticipated costs are known a further report will be provided to Committee.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** If the Council is unable to ensure appropriate support to children and young people, we will not be meeting their needs under the terms of the Children and Young People Act 2014 (Equalities Act 2010).
- 7.2** If the Council is unable to ensure appropriate support for all children, young people and staff this could result in reputational damage.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** As noted in the previously produced Equalities Impact Assessment, the ASN strategy and subsequent supports and guidance developed will enhance the quality of the service provided to all children, young people and staff and therefore can be seen to have a positive impact in terms of the equalities.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

Laura Mason
Chief Education Officer

Person to Contact: Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer
Services for Children and Young People
E-mail: claire.cusick@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices:

App.1 – WD For Families Website

WD for Families Site

- All information on activity in WD for Families Hubs can be accessed via our WD for Families Website. There is links to this site via the WD Wellbeing Site and via QR codes on posters.



App.2 – WDC Children's Rights Links

Twitter

[UNCRC WDC \(@UNCRC_WDC\) / X \(twitter.com\)](https://twitter.com/UNCRC_WDC)

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092175932400>

Background Papers:

Getting it Right for Every Child
[Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)
[Additional Support for Learning Statutory Guidance 2017](#)
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)
Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017)

Report to Educational Services Committee on 11 March 2020: Learning Estate Strategy 2020-2030

Wards Affected:

All Wards