

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer**

**Educational Services Committee: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023**

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**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 (WFW) 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 are in the process of transitioning into these. The planned building extension work is due to be undertaken later in school session 2022/23 has been delayed.
- 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. It is anticipated the resource will be finished in time for school session 2024-2025.
- 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.

**4.5** Notable progress has been as follows:

- Year 2 of the implementation of the Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE) will be completed in June of this year. All schools in the authority completed training at the beginning of the year and nominated a Champion to attend termly training and support sessions;
- Reviews of the impact of the Champions sessions on school staff and practice, inform us that almost all school Champions have increased confidence in using the Framework and in sharing this knowledge and understanding with practitioners in their establishments, leading to improved outcomes;
- Learning Assistants in all WDC schools undertook a range of professional learning supporting pupils with additional support needs during March and April. Almost all staff who attended the training reported that their knowledge, understanding and confidence in the area had markedly increased and that there would be a positive impact on abilities to support pupils. Participants particularly felt they benefitted from the hands-on practical nature of the training and the opportunity to collaborate with staff in a variety of establishments. Year three of our ASN Strategy will continue to develop the range of professional learning provided.
- Clear and consistent process have been established via a shared Transition Policy for our pupils transitioning into Specialist Settings. This policy has a clear timeline with details of accountability across services and proposed impact to support the transitions of our children and young people. This revised policy has taken account of all stakeholders as well; ensuring we meet the needs of all learners at key points of transition whilst maintaining equity and timely proportionate support for our most vulnerable learners.
- The implementation of Social communication, emotional regulation, transactional supports (SCERTS) in all specialist settings has ensured consistent approaches to using the SCERTS framework with parents/carers at review points for their children. This document was created by our SCERTS Champions with representation from across all specialist settings. It gives a comprehensive overview of the SCERTS approach as well as practical strategies to support home and school collaboration, providing a basis to build upon vital communication skills developed in each setting.
- A focus of year 2 of SCERTS development was developing Parental Involvement in the Framework. A May Conference enabled all settings the opportunity to learn from each other and share good practice in the range of ways this has positively impacted on the engagement of parents and carers with SCERTS. Leaders have developed a range of shared collegiate and In Service activities next session which will continue to develop inclusive practices and provide opportunities to learn with and from others.

- We continue to develop approaches to supporting our care experienced children and young people in a range of ways such as: specific tracking of attendance and attainment with targeted interventions to address gaps and working in collaboration with partners across the West Partnership to produce a Promise Award which will support schools in developing their awareness and understanding of The Promise. All schools will undertake professional learning on this with an ambition of completion during sessions 2023-2025, ensuring we maintain a care experienced lens and our commitment to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for our care experienced young people.

**4.6** 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.

**4.7** 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.

**4.8** This term a working group of Officers and young people collaborated to produce parent and pupil friendly Child Protection (CP) supports. The group comprised a range of pupils at different stages of secondary school who had varied life experiences. The group aimed to ensure the information shared contained key subjects such as: what constitutes abuse, when and where to get help and what happens next once you seek help. The supports were designed to use a mixture of QR codes, information via posters and visuals which will be shared in a range of ways and displayed across settings. A similar version to support those with additional needs is being produced. These will be launched in June and revised by all establishments in the new school term.

## **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

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**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