

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer

Educational Services Committee: 15th June 2022

Subject: Additional Support Needs Strategy Update Report

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is:

- a) to inform Educational Services Committee of progress on the strategy to support children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN).

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members of the Educational Services Committee are asked to:

- a) Note progress on the strategy and plans to address the projected increase in demand for services.

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 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.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** There are currently 13,800 school pupils and 1485 Early Learning and Childcare pupils in West Dunbartonshire Council. 5273 Pupils have ASN (38%), supported mainly in mainstream schools. Two hundred and forty two 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 which we hope will be addressed 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** Projections inform us there will be an increasing demand in numbers of children and young people who require support from mainstream and specialist settings. Our current ASN estate will not meet the predicted need and work is being undertaken to plan for this as part of the revised strategy.
- 4.3** It is the joint ambition of our Integrated Children's Services partnership to support as many of our children and young people as possible appropriately within West Dunbartonshire, by those closest to them; with the skillset to do so. This was identified as having a positive outcome for our children and young people in West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.4** The strategy reflects the National Improvement Framework and has a range of work streams which ensure a broad reach of improvements to learning, teaching, attainment and achievement as well as considering the development of the ASN estate. A range of staff from all sectors and settings has been involved in preparing and implementing the strategy.
- 4.5** All Education Leaders involved have committed to the workstreams and made good progress, despite the challenges of the pandemic and of remote engagement. Most notable achievements are:
- All staff in the 7 Specialist Settings have committed to the SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional

Supports) framework and approach. A positive impact identified from the previous impact assessment is that the framework will better equip staff in determining a child's current levels of performance in social and emotional functioning, monitoring progress over time, identifying educational outcomes that are most critical to the child, and design individualised and coordinated plan for the child and their family. Participants include all teaching staff and all support staff to ensure a consistent and equitable approach within and across all specialist settings in West Dunbartonshire. This Professional Learning involves independent and collaborative learning with lots of opportunities to reflect, review and refresh/amend practise to best meet the needs of all of our pupils, ensuring they are '*enabled to progress*'. Through evaluation staff stated that the shared collegiate sessions and opportunities to work collaboratively were 46% Very Helpful 54% Helpful. This effective collaboration across settings will be further developed within Year 2 Plans. The success of Year 1 implementation of SCERTS was celebrated at a SCERTS Conference (May In-Service) where each establishment shared their journey and next steps sharing notable impact on their ability to identify stages of development, child's needs and adopt clear planning process to meet these needs. In an attempt to develop practice and partnership working further two representative from the National Autism Implementation Group (NAIT) as well as few colleagues from health joined the conference.

- 31 ASN Co-ordinators across our mainstream settings, have been introduced to the CIRCLE Framework Train the Trainer Resource to help supports the underlying skills that pupils require to enable them to participate in school. The CIRCLE Framework is a way of organising and supporting input using a staged system of support, beginning with setting up an inclusive classroom environment. Our Collaborative Support Service are currently providing personalised Train the Trainer support to 3 schools to fully implement the CIRCLE Framework developing team knowledge and capacity to support some targeted pupils directly this session with a plan to fully implementation across all schools in session 2022-2023 to empower our staff to support all pupils, to promote inclusive practice and to encourage effective collaboration between school staff, parents/carers, partner services and other agencies.
- 18 staff have participated in training over 4 Lego Base Therapy workshops which were offered to all schools by the provider Cretovators. These workshops provide the theory and the practise supporting staff to develop collaborative play and social interaction skills such as turn taking, listening, initiation, eye contact, problem solving and sharing, with our children and young people. Participants in these sessions have stated they developed the skills necessary to implement in their own schools and many have done so with positive feedback and some have been able to build staff capacity by sharing with colleagues. The CSS team member who attended delivered the

training to all 30 Collaborative Support Service staff in February. We are currently establishing plans to cascade wider as part of the Inclusion Professional Learning Calendar for delivery in session 2022-2023 to all schools.

- Through auditing of teaching staff, support staff and parents/carers we have identified key aspects for learning which we will incorporate into our Professional Learning Calendar for Year 2.
- Our Collaborative Support Service have delivered a series of Professional Learning opportunities for all staff through the session:
 - 55 staff have engaged in Dyslexia Awareness Sessions
 - 47 staff have engaged Autism Spectrum Diagnosis Awareness and Supports Sessions
 - 26 staff have engaged Hearing Impairment Training Sessions
 - 22 staff have engaged in Supporting British Sign Language Sessions
 - 8 staff have engaged in Visual Impairment Learning Sessions.

4.6 In order to meet the projected needs of the learning estate, a short life working group is currently planning for the installation of temporary classroom accommodation in the Kilpatrick School Campus for the start of the new term. This will provide additional capacity of three classrooms and a sensory room. Communication with pupils, parents and partners has been considered and is planned at different phases in the development. Plans have been completed and are being progressed for the new build extension which is anticipated to be ready for Spring 2023.

4.7 Plans for the expansion of the proposed Riverside Campus are being developed and approval to undertake statutory consultation is currently being sought. Initial design and needs analysis have been undertaken to determine next steps.

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 The projected additional funding required for the learning estate expansion has been approved and planned for in current and future budgets.

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, this 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.

9.2 The strategy has been devised reflecting the views of pupils, parents, and a range of staff in schools as well as Trade Unions, Educational Psychologists, Head teachers and central officers.

10. Strategic Assessment

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

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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)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
(1989)

Wards Affected: All Wards

