

**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** 9 March 2023

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**Report by:** Director of Children's Services

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**Heading:** Renfrewshire – Getting it Right for Every Child – Inclusion Update

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. In August 2022, the Education and Children's Services Policy Board were asked to note the lessons that had been learned from the Additional Support Needs Review. These lessons shaped the development of the actions required to bring about improvements to support the wellbeing and learning of all our children and young people with additional support needs in mainstream school and early year's establishments.
- 1.2 There were nine actions agreed within the plan with the following common threads at the heart of their delivery:
- Improve communication and collaboration- ensuring the rights of the child are front and centre
  - Meeting the wellbeing and learning needs of all of our children and young people
  - Ensure we provide excellent Children's Services support services using a robust quality improvement framework
  - Invest in and develop all of our people to improve outcomes for children
  - Manage our resources effectively and equitably as close to the child as possible

The purpose of this paper is to update members on some of the main areas of progress.

- 1.3 In September 2022 the Scottish Government published the refresh of the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) policy and practice materials. In line with this, Children's Services, in conjunction with the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), updated Renfrewshire Council's GIRFEC policy and procedures. This refresh is being launched through multi-agency training and awareness raising events ongoing from February through to June. These training sessions are fully subscribed and there is representation

from Children's Services and the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and other services such as Police Scotland and the third sector organisations.

- 1.4 As part of this work there has been the development of "Link Up" initiative with the aim to promote networking opportunities across all agencies. This is an exciting opportunity for agencies including education, health and social care partnership, social work, children's reporter, Police and third sector partners to share good practice and network. There are two sessions on offer, and both are at full capacity.
  - 1.5 Within our schools and centres one of our actions was to better enable our practitioners to better identify barriers to the learning and development of our children and young people. Part of this improvement agenda is also to strengthen decision-making in order to meet the needs of our children and young people. Progress within this action is strong and we are developing a clear, solution-focused assessment framework. This work has been carried out in partnership with Children's Services Educational Psychology department. Our schools and centre staff have also been key in shaping this process to ensure that we have robust and consistent approaches across all our schools/centres.
  - 1.6 In line with national policy, we are also making good progress with updating Renfrewshire's Transition Policy for children and young people with additional support needs. This policy will ensure there is consistent practice across our schools and centres at transition points for example from early years to primary one, regardless of where the child is placed. This policy, as with all of our refresh work, will have the child and family at the centre of the decision-making process and plans and will ensure that transition discussions/planning take place at least two years prior to the transition date.
  - 1.7 Improving our professional for all teaching and support staff has been a high priority. As such almost all schools are now trained in The CIRCLE Framework using a train the trainer model to ensure sustainability. This is an excellent resource that supports quality assessment and planning of interventions for children and young people. It provides support to set up an inclusive classroom environment, uses checklists and planning tools to support professional dialogue and can be used to document strategies and record professional learning.  
*(CIRCLE (Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning and Education) is an evidence-based resource that support inclusive practice within education.)*
  - 1.8 In summary there has been significant progress made with this portfolio and there are strong plans in place to continue to ensure that our provision for children and young people with additional support needs is fair and equitable and that resources are deployed as close the child as possible for ease of access.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note the progress made within the inclusion strategy.
  - 2.2. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board are invited to meet with the Head of Service for Inclusion and the GIRFEC Lead Officer to learn more about the GIRFEC refresh.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1. Across Scotland there is an increasing number of children and young people being identified with additional support needs. A similar increase is being experienced in Renfrewshire. The needs of these children and young people can be complex and they may require a range of different supports and interventions to help them make the best of their education experiences.
- 3.2. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 changed the way in which support for pupils with additional support needs was managed and widened the definition of additional support needs. The local authority is required to have a range of supports and services to meet each child's educational needs by addressing barriers to learning within mainstream by making reasonable adjustments unless certain exceptions apply.
- 3.3. The presumption of mainstreaming means that parents have the right for their child to be educated in a mainstream school environment.
- 3.4. In 2019, the Scottish Government published updated guidance on the presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting. This revised guidance states

*"Inclusive education in Scotland starts from the belief that education is a human right and the foundation for a more just society.*

*An inclusive approach, with an appreciation of diversity and an ambition for all to achieve to their full potential, is essential to getting it right for every child and raising attainment for all. Inclusion is the cornerstone to help us achieve equity and excellence in education for all of our children and young people."*

- 3.5. In 2020, the Scottish Government published a report on the national review of additional support for learning, "Support for learning: all our children and all their potential". This report contains a number of interlinked and co-dependent recommendations across nine high level themes. The overarching theme is of children and young people participation, in line with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 3.6. One of the key messages from the national review was that children and young people want to be included in their schools and communities. This view was echoed by our children and young people, whose views were captured during our stakeholder engagement, which took place at the beginning of the review and again more recently in June 2022.

- 3.7 Another key message from the national report is that the concept of "mainstream" needs to be redefined and repositioned for the profile of children and young people as they are now and are projected to be in the future, not as they were in the past. Nationally there are examples of mainstream education settings that have stretched and adapted their culture and environments to the benefit of all children and young people. There are also very good examples of this in Renfrewshire where schools are providing responsive personalised adjustments for individual children and young people. Whilst this matters for all it is vital to include those with additional support needs (Support for learning; All our children and all their potential, Scottish Government 2020).
- 3.8 Capacity to deliver inclusion is an important focus across education. Working with partners to deliver joint training and approaches builds capacity of those in schools and other services.
- 3.9 It has been recognised nationally that categorising young people for support according to a particular need is not helpful, and we must ensure that holistic assessment of a child or young person's needs mean that the support they require can be provided in a way that will suit their needs, rather than the child having to adapt to a particular environment.

#### **4.0 Next Steps**

- 4.1 We are currently establishing a Renfrewshire GIRFEC website. This will be a central location in which all policies, procedures and proformas can be added and updated as required. We are working with teams across the service and linking in with multi-agency collaborations such as Ren10 to develop simple pathways for requesting assistance.
- 4.2 Through this partnership with other services and our schools/centres we will continue to collate and create a suite of interventions to ensure children and families are supported appropriately which are allocated equitably through a simple Request for Assistance mechanism. This builds on the work already established through the development of Ren10.
- 4.3 We will continue to provide bespoke professional learning, as required, to support the development of the staged intervention framework. This has already included engaging with 31 establishments and providing tailored sessions for Education Managers, Early Years Team, Early Years Teachers, Aspiring Principal Teachers and Home Link. We have also developed training for our Additional Support Needs Assistants and Classroom Assistants which focuses on their role in supporting children and young people with additional support needs. This learning has been shaped by the workforce through the results of an audit which asked them to identify their training needs. Further universal learning sessions are planned and bespoke work will be provided, as requested, following the delivery of training and the roll out of the updated policy.
- 4.4 As part of our training programme we have been working on auditing our response to the education audit for Prevent strategies. Prevent is one part of the government's overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

The aim of Prevent is to:

- tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism
- safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention
- enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate

We are updating our current Child Protection training to ensure Prevent is refreshed annually.

- 4.5 Parent workshops are planned for the summer term. This will ensure that parents/carers of children and young people with additional support needs are fully aware of the work of the GIRFEC refresh and improvements to assessing, planning, and evaluating interventions in line with the staged intervention framework.

### **Implications of this report**

**1. Financial**

All proposed changes will be implemented within the overall budget allocation for the service.

**2. HR and Organisational Development**

A revised career pathway will be developed for local government employees.

**3. Council Planning**

Renfrewshire's new Council Plan is currently being developed and will be presented to Elected Members after summer recess. The Plan will identify high-level strategic outcomes the Council intends to achieve over the next five years and the action needed to deliver on these. For now, actions are grouped under the following four themes: Place; People; Sustainability and Living our values.

The matters referred to in this report align and contribute to all high-level strategic outcomes. Incorporating the learning and feedback from the review into the development of the inclusion strategy will ensure resources are directed to children, young people and their families within the context of their needs and respective communities. This people and place-based approach also evidences the Councils approach to working fairly and collaboratively to deliver better services.

**4. Legal**

None.

**5. Property/Assets**

None.

**6. Information Technology**

None.

**7. Equality and Human Rights**

No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of

individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required, prior to implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

**8. Health and Safety**

None.

**9. Procurement**

None.

**10. Risk**

None.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

**12. Cosla Policy Position**

None.

**13. Climate Risk**

None.

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**List of Background Papers**

[Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

[The Promise Scotland](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[General Teaching Council Scotland - Professional Standards](#)

[Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 - notes](#)

[Presumption to provide education in mainstream setting](#)

[Support for Learning: All our Children and all their Potential](#)

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**Children's Services**

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