
To: Education & Children's Services Policy Board

On: 18 January 2018

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Strategic review of educational services and support for children with additional support needs in mainstream education

1. Summary

- 1.1 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 children and young people are complex and require a range of different supports and interventions to help them make the best of their education experiences.
- 1.2 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 provides a definition of additional support needs. A child or young person, for whatever reason, is unable to benefit from school education without additional support would be considered as having additional support needs under the definition of the 2004 Act. The definition is broad and covers a wide range of needs from physical and learning disabilities to family and care circumstances.
- 1.3 Parents have a right to request that their child is able to access a mainstream school (presumption of mainstream). The local authority is required to have a range of supports and services to support the child's educational needs. Presently, Renfrewshire has a range of supports to support children with additional support needs make the best use of mainstream education. For some children, that support is provided within their mainstream school and for others the support can include attendance at a support base.

- 1.4 The Renfrewshire approach to supporting children with additional support needs is outlined in the Getting it Right for Every Learner strategy. This approach was agreed at an Education Policy Board in 2013 and details a staged intervention approach for ensuring the needs of children and young people are identified and met.
- 1.5 In view of the increasing number of children with additional support needs and the location of authority wide bases, it has been agreed that a strategic review of educational services and support for children with additional support needs in mainstream education is required. The review will focus on ensuring that additional support needs are identified as early in a child's educational journey as possible, that supports are provided in the child's mainstream school where possible and that where a child needs support from outwith their mainstream school this is provided as close to home as possible.
- 1.6 Children's Services has established a working group, the Inclusion Planning and Support Group, to undertake the review outlined above. The working group is led by an Education Manager and has representation from head teachers and psychological services. The review will not include the services at Riverbrae or Mary Russell schools as the focus is on the support for children with additional support needs in the mainstream. The overall strategic review will be led by the Assistant Director (Education) and the Head of Early Years and Inclusion.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Children's Policy Board notes:
- [a] that a strategic review of additional support needs provision to support children in mainstream schools is underway; and
 - [b] that a revised strategy for meeting the educational needs of children with additional support needs in Renfrewshire will be brought to a future meeting of the Policy board by September 2018.
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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 increase in demand was the subject of a report prepared by the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee in May 2017.

- 3.2 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 outlines the requirement for education authorities to provide education to all children in mainstream schools in accordance with the wishes of parents wherever possible. The Scottish Government have published a consultation document on Excellence and Equity for All: Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming. This document outlines the key features of inclusion and guidance on how to improve inclusive practice in schools.
- 3.3 Most of the 23,544 children of school age in Renfrewshire schools attend their local school. Within the mainstream primary school provision, there are 1494 children identified as having additional support needs. The number of children identified as having additional support needs within the mainstream secondary provision is 1795. 386 children with additional support needs attend either Riverbrae or Mary Russell schools.
- 3.4 Renfrewshire has specific educational provision for children with additional support needs including Riverbrae and Mary Russell schools. There are a number of support bases which operate within mainstream schools which provide support for children with additional support needs. Some of the bases operate as part of the mainstream school in which they are located, whilst others operate as an authority wide resource. In addition, the authority has a range of staff employed to support children with additional support needs including additional needs assistants, home link, looked after children's team, educational psychology service and the inclusion support team.
- 3.5 The present Renfrewshire additional needs strategy has a number of positive aspects ensuring that children's needs are identified and supports provided to help them on their educational journey. The strategy was developed in 2013 and following a number of recent engagement event with schools, it was agreed that a review and updating of the strategy was required. The review will focus on the range of supports available to ensure that children are able to continue in their mainstream school. Furthermore the review will consider the principles of inclusion, the presumption of mainstream and the accessibility of authority wide services.
- 3.6 In view of the increasing number of children with additional support needs and the location of authority wide bases, it has been agreed that a strategic review of educational services and support for children with additional support needs in mainstream education is required. The review will focus on ensuring that additional support needs are identified as early in a child's educational journey as possible, that supports are provided in the child's mainstream school where possible and that where a child needs support from outwith their mainstream school, this is provided as close to home as possible.
- 3.7 In redesigning a model which will meet the needs of all stakeholders, there will need to be consideration of a range of factors which may include:
- flexibility for head teachers to negotiate resources across a locality area or on a cluster basis;

- ensuring the effective utilisation of the skills and experience of staff within the current authority specialist support teams and provision;
- shifting the focus from supporting children with additional support needs in a range of authority bases and with support from central teams to re-aligning supports to schools/localities;
- reviewing the focus of the services to ensure that they meet the needs of the children and young people on an ongoing basis; and
- further develop the training and development programme for staff to ensure they have the skills required to meet the needs of children with additional support needs.

3.8 The strategic review of educational services and support for children with additional support needs in mainstream education will be led by the Assistant Director (Education) and the Head of Early Years and Inclusion. A working group, the Inclusion Planning and Support Group, has been established to undertake the review outlined above. The working group is led by an Education Manager and has representation from head teachers and psychological services. The review group will not include the services at Riverbrae or Mary Russell schools as the focus is on the support for children with additional support needs in the mainstream.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The review of the additional support needs strategy will result in better value for the council through the targeted deployment of support staff in an effective manner and will be contained within the present budget.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The review of additional support needs strategy will consider the roles required to ensure that timely and focused support is provided to ensure children are able to continue in mainstream education. A staff development and training programme will be considered as part of the review.
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
 - Our Renfrewshire is well – the revised additional support needs strategy will ensure that the effective inclusion of children with additional support needs is in line with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child which ensure the wellbeing of all children and young people

- Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all –the revised additional support needs strategy will ensure equity of opportunity for children and young people with additional support needs
 - Working together to improve outcomes – the revised additional support needs strategy will focus on the need for all relevant services to work together to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people with additional support needs
4. **Legal** – the revised additional support needs strategy will be in line with the legal requirements of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2005; and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
 5. **Property/Assets** – N/A
 6. **Information Technology** – N/A
 7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities 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 at this stage.
 8. **Health & Safety** – N/A
 9. **Procurement** – N/A.
 10. **Risk** – N/A
 11. **Privacy Impact** – N/A
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – N/A
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List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1 ***Education (Additional support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.***
- (b) Background Paper 2 ***Getting it Right for Every Learner Policy*** Renfrewshire Education Policy Board 2013
- (c) Background Paper 3 ***How is Additional Support for Learning working in practice*** Scottish Government 2017.

- (d) Background Paper 4 ***Empowering Schools: A consultation on the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill 2017*** Scottish Government
- (e) Background Paper 5 ***Excellence and Equity for All: Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming*** Scottish Government 2017

The foregoing background papers will be retained within (*Children's Services*)for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Susan Bell, Education Manager, 0141 618 7221 susan.bell-hq@renfrewshire.gov.uk

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