

**To: Education and Children Policy Board**

**On: 3 November 2016**

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

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**Heading: Review of Local Authorities Actions to Tackle Unnecessary Bureaucracy and Undue Workload in Schools**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The review of local authorities' action to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload in schools was published on 19 September 2016. This followed visits to all local authorities in Scotland with focus groups of council officers, head teachers, teachers and professional organisations.
  - 1.2. Inspectors judged that Renfrewshire has provided support and guidance that places reasonable demands on staff.
  - 1.3. Education Scotland has published a number of recommendations for consideration by all local authorities. In addition specific actions for each local authority have been shared. These are not part of the published report.
  - 1.4. Following publication of the review children's services have continued to work closely with teacher professional organisations through the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) to ensure the recommendations are acted upon.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The education and children policy board is asked to note the contents of this report.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1. The review of local authorities' action to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload in schools was published on 19 September 2016. This followed visits to all local authorities in Scotland with focus groups of council officers, head teachers, teachers and professional organisations.

- 3.2. In undertaking the review, inspectors sought to identify causes of unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload across a range of aspects of curriculum for expectations. These themes were identified as:
- forward and curriculum planning;
  - assessment;
  - self evaluation and improvement planning;
  - tracking, monitoring and reporting; and
  - IT systems
- 3.3. Unnecessary bureaucracy was defined as excessive paperwork or form filling leading to unproductive workload for staff in schools. Children's services works to ensure that staff in schools are empowered to deliver high quality learning experiences for all our children and young people. As such, head teachers are empowered to make decisions that will support this overall aim. Expectations, therefore, are in line with this aspiration.
- 3.4. Inspectors judged that Renfrewshire has provided support and guidance that places reasonable demands on staff.
- 3.5. The main recommendations for all local authorities are that they should:
- working with LNCTs, take action to address the areas for improvement highlighted to them in the specific feedback they received through this review;
  - continue to monitor the impact of the support and guidance they have provided for schools to ensure it is supporting high-quality learning and teaching while also tackling bureaucracy and addressing issues of undue workload;
  - take account of the best practice identified in the report;
  - be proactive in ensuring schools take account of Education Scotland's statement on CfE, published in August 2016; and
  - ensure schools have access to sufficient broadband capacity and stable and reliable IT platforms.
- 3.6. The specific areas for improvement for Renfrewshire are:
- continue to ensure that local guidelines and agreements on tackling workload result in a focus on learning and teaching and improvement in all schools.
  - there is scope to work with schools to take a closer look at the impact of staffing constraints on tackling workload and bureaucracy.
  - there is scope for collective agreement from head teachers and teachers for IT systems to make a greater impact on tackling bureaucracy.
  - in partnership with Scottish Government and Education Scotland, continue to support schools to implement national policy within the context of tackling

- 3.7. It should be noted that workload associated with the undertaking of the SQA qualifications was identified as a concern in secondary schools. Following the publication of the review the cabinet secretary announced a review of assessment undertaken by teachers. It is expected that changes will be implemented from 2017.
- 3.8. To this end a JNC subgroup will meet again shortly in order to ensure swift progress is made. In addition there has already been a meeting of head teachers in order to highlight the report and the importance of tackling the issues identified.
- 3.9. Children's services works closely with teacher professional organisations. Workload in schools is monitored through a JNC sub group. Where issues arise these are addressed timeously and effectively. As a result of the publication of the review this sub group will develop an appropriate action plan in order to address the recommendations made.
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### **Implications of this report**

- 1. Financial Implications**  
None.
- 2. HR and Organisational Development Implications**  
None.
- 3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications**  

Children and Young People	- Schools are empowered to ensure learning and teaching is prioritised above unnecessary paperwork.
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- 4. Legal Implications**  
None.
- 5. Property/Assets Implications**  
None.
- 6. Information Technology Implications**  
None.
- 7. Equality and Human Rights Implications**  
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 for example it is for noting only. If required following 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 Implications**  
None.

**9. Procurement Implications**

None.

**10. Risk Implications**

None.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

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**List of Background Papers**

None.

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***Children's Services***

*GMcK/LG*

*18 October 2016*

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