

Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

To: Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

On: 26 April 2022

EAL Provision Report by Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side)

Background

At the full Council meeting in March, 2022 Renfrewshire Council publicly stated its concern at the worsening crisis in Afghanistan and generously donated £10,000 to the Disasters Relief Fund. It has also subsequently publicly condemned the war in Ukraine and pledged support for the thousands of people fleeing the conflict.

The EIS has made similar declarations in support of the people of Ukraine who are affected by the current crisis and also made a donation of £50,000 at its March Council meeting, contributing to the Solidarity Fund in support of Ukrainian refugees. The EIS has also published a suite of educational packs to welcome young people from migrant and refugee families into Scottish schools entitled '*Welcome to Scotland*'. These are available for distribution.

With the backdrop of global conflict, a war on mainland Europe and with the rise in numbers of immigrants fleeing war in Ukraine, the teaching unions are concerned that there is a requisite increase in the number of young people in mainstream education facing additional barriers to learning as a result of their specific language difficulties. Many families have been relocated and are now resident in Renfrewshire and therefore have the same rights to access education as others. It is felt therefore that there is a pressing need to augment the number of EAL specialists and increase provision and support to young people to enable them to access the curriculum and improve their attainment.

It has been reported to the EIS that many teachers are dealing with increases in the numbers of multi-lingual classes with a corresponding impact in the related workload. More importantly there is a growing dissatisfaction that the

needs of learners are not able to be met despite the strenuous efforts of teachers. The resources available were inadequate prior to the recent crisis- they were already over-stretched but the recent influx of new learners with EAL needs has highlighted the gap in provision: within one primary school it is reported that there are nearly 40 languages spoken, whilst in others there are varying numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language yet the level of support being provided is not keeping up with the increasing needs and numbers of learners. Teachers, many of whom feel ill-equipped to cope with the growing demands, are struggling to meet the needs of all learners and fulfil the legal obligation to include all learners.

Furthermore, the provision of EAL support to learners has been adversely affected due to Covid by some long-term staff absences within EAL services which has again had an adverse impact on learners. Teachers too are, in classes, having to teach many subjects to multi-lingual classes with very little training and attainment is affected by the language barriers.

Teachers within the current class contact constraints are receiving those pupils with English as an Additional or foreign Language arriving at various points throughout the year. However, many report a lack of specific training or adequate targeted support to meet the needs of EAL learners to ensure they are achieving, included and successful. The situation has an impact not only on teacher workload but on morale as well as on the attainment of our EAL learners.

Within Renfrewshire there is a diverse number of languages and nationalities and so the teachers' side believes the council has a responsibility to ensure that teachers have adequate EAL training opportunities and must ensure targeted support interventions are in place in all our schools across Renfrewshire. The teacher' side feels that the current EAL provision across Renfrewshire requires to be enhanced to meet the increasing language needs of children and young people in our schools.

Action.

- It be noted that the trade unions are seeking an increase in the level of provision for EAL learners to address some of the imbalances and to

help in the inclusion of that particular group of learners in Renfrewshire's schools.

- That Renfrewshire Council agree to disseminate and distribute the EIS publications *Welcome to Scotland* packs to families in need as part of its inclusion and equality agenda. These can be downloaded from:

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Welcome-To-Scotland/EarlyYear>

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Welcome-To-Scotland/P5S3>

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Welcome-To-Scotland/SeniorSchool>

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Welcome-To-Scotland/Parents>