

SUPPORTING LEARNERS - SERVICE REVIEW

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Members with an update on the implementation of the Supporting Learners Service Review, the staffing allocation for the 2016/17 session, and evidence of any impact on key participation measures (attendance and exclusion).

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 note the ongoing work to improve the allocation process for 2017/18 session set out in **Appendix 1**; and

2.2 consider the analysis of participation measures drawn from part session data as set out in **Appendix 2**.

3. Considerations

3.1 Due to the small number of exclusions and in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and avoid the risk of identifying individual pupils, this report does not to provide information at a school level.

3.2 This school session has seen the most significant impact on schools from the implementation of the Supporting Learners Service Review, as agreed by Members in November 2014. Specifically:

3.2.1 The removal of the Classroom Assistant role and the introduction of the new Learning Assistant role, which has resulted in change in role and base for some staff

3.2.2 The logistical challenge for the Supporting Learners Team of bringing together under new terms and conditions for Additional Support for Learning Assistants and those Classroom Assistants who did not take up the offer of ERVS. Noting that Classroom Assistants were matched into the new the role at Band 5, moving from Band 3.

3.2.3 The difficulties in the staffing allocation with the unprecedented increase in children identified as needing full time specialist support.

3.3 The challenges and responses from the new Supporting Learner's Team are set out in the report to the Children, Young People and Lifelong Learners Committee on the 12th December 2016 - **Appendix 1**. The Committee noted the activity to mitigate the impact of the latest phase of the Supporting Learners Service Review, and agreed to put on hold the final Service Review savings reduction with the target of £480,000 for 2017/18 being considered instead as part of the budget setting process.

3.4 The allocation of Supporting Learners staff to schools, specifically Learning Assistants, to support children identified as having additional support needs was undertaken in the same way as in the previous 2 years for 2016/17. The Wigtown school's

identified significant differences between the hours of support needed and the number of staff hours that were available; with more hours available than identified as being needed. The voluntary nature of the ERVS process had resulted in fewer staff leaving the service in Wigtown than in the other three areas.

3.5 In order to manage the overstaffing in Wigtownshire and to mitigate the impact on the other areas it was necessary to move Learning Assistants across schools and agree that staff absences or changing demands in Wigtown would need to be met from within the overall allocation. Though the levels of need identified have been questioned by some schools, the information used is taken from the needs assessments and plans provided by schools. Revisions to the allocation process for 2017/18 will produce a more robust analysis of the levels of need and required support; particularly in relation to those children identified as having the highest levels of specialist need.

3.6 In Wigtown this school session has been characterised by significant emerging needs in relation to a small number of children/young people which has highlighted the need for more robust differentiation of support. There has also been an increase in the numbers of new children to the area with significant additional support needs whose needs have had to be met within Wigtown area's over-allocation.

Participation

3.7 Schools have found the current session challenging in accommodating the loss of the Classroom Assistant role and the staff moves, a consequence of the staffing restructuring and allocation process. In terms of evidencing the impact of these challenges on outcomes for children and young people with Additional Support Needs, there is limited performance evidence other than anecdote or participation indicators.

3.8 Statistically those most at risk of non-attendance and exclusion are more likely to have a predisposing vulnerability. Given the clear link between school attendance and subsequent life chances, the exacerbating impact of non-attendance and exclusion for those who are most vulnerable is recognised as significant. National data demonstrates that children and young people who are most likely to not attend school or be excluded are those:

- Assessed or declared as having a disability
- Looked After
- From the most deprived areas
- Have an additional support need
- Have an additional support need that is identified as social, emotional and behavioural.

Exclusion

3.9 It is not appropriate to provide specific details on supports for children and young people who have been excluded from school. Therefore, Members are asked to consider our Council's approach to "Preventing and Managing School Exclusions" (as taken from Included, Engaged and Involved (2016) Scottish Government):

- A whole school ethos of prevention, early intervention and support; promoting positive relationships, learning and behaviour.
- A safe and nurturing environment.
- All children have a right to an education and education authorities a duty to provide it.
- All children need to be included, engaged and involved in their learning.
- All children have a right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education.
- Exclusion should be a last resort.
- Where exclusion is used, it should be a proportionate response where there is no appropriate alternative.
- Exclusion should be as short a period as possible, with the time used to resolve the situation and ensure positive and appropriate support is in place.

Performance Analysis

3.10 **Appendix 2** provides an analysis of participation indicators based on current performance data; covering the first two terms of the school session. The analysis is provided to Members in the context of proxy indicators for the impact of the changes made to the Supporting Learners Team given they can be benchmarked against 2015/16 data, before any changes were made.

4. Governance Assurance

4.1 The Corporate Management Team and Education Services Management Team have been consulted on this report and Teaching Union and support staff Union representatives have been consulted on this report.

5. Impact Assessment

5.1 As this report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Hew Smith	Integration and Inclusion Manager	Hew.smith@dumgal.gov.uk

Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION
Gillian Brydson	Head of Education

Appendices 2

APPENDIX 1 - Supporting Learners Report to the Children, Young People and Lifelong Learners Committee on the 12th December 2016

[SUPPORTING LEARNERS - SERVICE REVIEW - REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LIFELONG LEARNING; \(Appendix 1\); \(Appendix 2\)](#)

APPENDIX 2 - Performance Analysis
