

<i>item:</i>	10
<i>report:</i>	CYP23/08

2ND RESPONSE TO HCF INCLUSION REPORT

By Stephen Iliffe

Summary

This report provides members with a follow-up officer response to the report prepared by Highland Children's Forum (HCF) on Inclusion Issues "What Difference Would There Be If Children's Experience Framed Policy?" which was presented to the Joint Committee on 21st April 2006, and initially responded to in June 2006. The Committee asked that a further response be sought "showing how services had considered the report and incorporated its recommendations". This report seeks to demonstrate how the issues raised are reflected in current policy and practice.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Highland Council and NHS Highland, through the Highland Joint Committee for Children and Young People, continues to provide support for the Highland Children's Forum (HCF). The core role of HCF is to represent the views of Children and Young People in the Highlands who have Additional Support Needs.
- 1.2 During the period June 2004 – September 2005 the HCF Children's Consultation worker undertook a number of visits to discuss experiences of educational inclusion with children and young people and their families, and with professionals.
- 1.3 Following these visits The Highland Children's Forum prepared a Report: "What Difference Would There Be If Children's Experience Framed Policy?". This report provided an account of the experiences of some children and young people with additional support needs who attend both mainstream and specialist schools. The report highlighted that whilst much good practice could be evidenced, further developments were still needed to ensure that all children were valued equally and enabled to participate fully in education with all barriers to learning removed.
- 1.4 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 came in to force in November 2006. This legislation requires education authorities to identify pupils with additional educational support needs and to plan collaboratively with partner agencies and services to support the education of each child or young person. The legislation requires education authorities to have regard to the views of children and young people.
- 1.5 Equality legislation has further increased the duty on education

authorities to plan for the needs of all pupils, and to take account of user views in this planning process. The Highland Council has now completed its second Accessibility Strategy based on an audit of all schools. This Strategy continues to aim to remove structural barriers, as well as developing the ethos of inclusion.

2 Developments

The report “What Difference Would There Be If Children’s Experience Framed Policy?” made five major recommendations:

- i to maximise participation,
- ii to remove environmental barriers
- iii to remove structural barriers
- iv to remove attitudinal barriers
- v to value diversity.

2.1 Maximising Participation

The Integrated Children’s Plan, For Highland’s Children 2 (FHC2), which has Inclusion as an overarching theme, includes targets which address many of these recommendations. This plan is coming to the end of its delivery period and planning is now taking place for FHC3. This planning process includes auditing the impact of action taken while implementing FHC2 and seeking the views of service users in relation to the content of FHC 3.

The Council's Education, Culture and Sport Service (ECS) offers a comprehensive range of training programmes for teaching and non-teaching staff. Much of this training is relevant to all of the recommendations above, but the following training elements are most relevant to maximising participation:

- a. The annual training programme for probationer teachers and teachers returning to employment (which includes Additional Support Needs and Inclusion)
- b. ECS recognised at an early stage that A Curriculum for Excellence was intended to make a significant contribution to enabling a widening range of pupils to engage with and find relevance in the school curriculum and there has been a continuing programme of INSET events.
- c. A common theme within much of the training provided by the Additional Support Needs Specialist Services is ensuring that adults support the participation of the children and young people in their own planning, learning, and self-management.

ECS has produced detailed guidance in relation to the educational planning processes for pupils (IEPs and CSPs) and this guidance emphasises the value of the contributions of parents and children and young people to these processes.

Working groups were set up to produce information and guidance for schools, professionals, and parents on specific disorders. Information packs are now available in every school on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and a Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) pack is now due to be distributed. Both parents and pupils have been involved in the production of these packs and the views of pupils have influenced both style and content.

In addition to supporting HCF, The Highland Council and NHS Highland also provide substantial funding to CHIP+ (Children in the Highlands Information Point +) to enable parents, carers and young people to access information and advice which is independent of the statutory organisations. Both The Highland Council and NHS Highland maintain detailed websites which provide information and guidance for parents/ carers and pupils about engaging with and contributing to assessment and planning processes.

2.2 Removing Environmental Barriers

In order to continue to remove environmental barriers to inclusion, The Highland Council continues to develop and improve a range of provisions, from specialist to mainstream with support to meet a range of needs and to offer choice to children, young persons and their families. The new Public Private Partnership builds such as, Drummond School, new resourced bases in Inshes Primary School and Millburn Academy offer the most modern and flexible environments for pupils with additional support needs. Improved specialist facilities have also been included in all new school builds, for example Resolis Primary, Kinlochleven High and Primary schools, Dingwall Academy and Portree High School. In addition, the Accessibility strategy audit highlights adaptations required in schools to meet individual or changing needs.

The Council's ECS and Social Work Services (SWS) in collaboration with NHS Highland is taking forward an Equipment and Adaptations Initiative which includes the purchase of an agreed range of equipment, a shared inventory and a shared equipment store. This project is expected to lead both to continuity of equipment across home, school and respite settings and to efficiency savings.

2.3 Removing Structural Barriers

A range of systems have been developed in order for children and young people to own a document which records information about their needs and the strategies required to meet them. These include SPELL booklets for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Learning Styles sheets that record for teachers or college staff the most effective teaching approaches to maximise a pupil's learning, Communication passports, which inform adults and pupils a child's preferred way of interacting. Further work is currently underway to develop guidance in relation to information storage and information sharing in schools.

Multi-service working groups, including parents and pupils were established to develop joint policies for Intimate Care and Moving and Handling procedures. Joint understanding has been further enhanced by ensuring all plans and protocols are written in collaboration with parents, carers and where possible pupils, which provides continuity of care for the child or young person.

A major piece of multi-agency work has been undertaken to produce a transitions pathway and guidance for all children and young people. This pathway and guidance has been produced with pupils and parents involvement at every stage. Pupils with additional support needs in the last year of their school education have been tracked through the transitions process to highlight areas of difficulty and the guidance and pathway have tried to ensure a consistent clear process at this time of great change for young people. In addition, the guidance hopes to make sure that all approaches and supports required by the pupil remain in any new environment they transfer to.

ECS continues to respond to the Council's geography and location by supporting and maintaining expert education services to provide advice, training and some direct teaching for pupils with hearing impairment, visual impairment or autistic spectrum disorders, or who would benefit from the use of augmentative technology. These specialist education services have made available locally a level of expertise, which was previously only available from national services based in Central Scotland.

Work has just concluded on a Behaviour Policy, and on supporting Guidance a Training Strategy to promote positive relationships in schools. This policy and guidance is based on three complimentary approaches: Solution focused approaches, Emotional Literacy, and Restorative Practices, which support schools in developing an ethos within which children feel valued, understood, and supported.

The Highland Council and NHS Highland are currently collaborating to develop policy and guidance covering the administration of both prescription medication and symptomatic relief in schools.

2.4 Removing Attitudinal Barriers and Valuing Diversity

ECS continues to offer a programme of training opportunities for school managers to help them and their staff to develop a positive and inclusive school ethos, and to understand the legal and policy environments within which agencies and individuals work.

HMIE reports continue to emphasise the responsibility of all teachers to differentiate the curriculum and educational experience appropriately for all children who live within the area serviced by any school, together with training in differentiation. Both the ECS Quality Improvement Officers and ASN teams offer support to schools to help staff take these responsibilities. Initial teacher training courses in Scotland now include training in differentiation and meeting individual needs,

ECS maintains links with various Universities in Scotland who offer post-graduate, specialist qualifications in inclusion issues to ensure the Council has staff skilled to a high level.

Guidance has been drafted on good practice in information sharing. This will ensure that new or supply staff can be quickly and clearly informed of the needs of individuals in their classes and learning strategies required to maximise these pupils learning opportunities.

The introduction of the single shared assessment and child plan through the GIRFEC process is further promoting clarity and consistency in the way individual needs are met.

3 Resource Implications

Resources have already been identified to support the actions detailed in this report and no additional monies require to be identified.

Recommendation

Members of the Joint Committee are asked to support the continuing work summarised in this report.

Stephen Iliffe

Senior Manager: Additional Support Needs