

## **Additional Support Needs (ASN) Transformation**

On 14 February, the Council agreed proposals for the transformation of ASN services as part of a Change Programme.

The Highland Council currently spends a budget of £36.1M on ASN, with a staffing establishment of 1,253 FTE. Highland currently has 13,461 pupils with at least one ASN need and stage.

In Highland, we have the highest reported levels of ASN in Scotland. Comparative Councils have much lower levels identified and are achieving improved outcomes. The % of Highland primary pupils identified as ASN is 37.2% compared with a national average of 23.5%. The % of Highland secondary pupils with ASN is 40.6% compared with a national average of 29.9%. This tells us that we need to closely examine our model and practices.

The need to review how the Council delivers additional support in schools was recognised through a redesign review carried out in 2016 and the implementation of changes arising from this was agreed within the budget proposals for 2019-22 on 14 February 2019.

In addition to public and staff engagement, there has been extensive engagement with Head Teachers both in November and again in the new year. In ongoing discussions from 2016 until now it has been recognised that the current allocation process requires to be reviewed to ensure there is a fit for purpose process in place that also meets the changing needs of both our children and our school settings.

The Council's focus is on embedding professional practice and skills within the school system, enabling Highland schools to build capacity in the classroom and support staff at all levels to identify and respond appropriately to needs in an inclusive and appropriate way that recognises the evolving knowledge we have around the variety of complex needs that exist in 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

A phased approach will be taken to resource allocation so that it is equitable and targeted to where it is most needed. We are now in the process of allocating resources to schools for the next school year, which will be completed in May, and following this, we aim to work closely with all staff and schools to ensure a smooth transition.

To avoid the need for redundancies, vacancy controls, reallocations, retraining and internal deployment will be used to reconfigure the workforce to a more efficient and effective model which will continue to provide the appropriate levels of support to children to enable them to achieve their best potential.

We will continue to target support to those pupils with greatest needs and there will be no reduction in the quality of support given to our pupils with significant and complex support needs. In many cases, an evaluation of how we meet needs will result in better outcomes for both individuals and groups of children and consistency across Highland.

An ASN Transformation Project is being set up as part of the Change Programme and

progress will be regularly monitored and reported to members. A training programme for teachers and PSAs is currently being developed for implementation from May 2019. Briefing packs have been prepared for staff and information on the process of change is being communicated over the coming days, working closely with Trade Unions.

Budget savings and improvements will be phased over three years to allow sufficient time to make the necessary changes and Teachers and Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) will be supported through the change process. The Council is committed to protecting jobs, making changes without the need for redundancies wherever possible, while continuing to meet the needs of all pupils.

Moving staffing resource between schools in “teams” is business as usual, as ASN needs change on a regular basis from school to school, as pupils are identified, or change or leave school. It is important to have a responsive, flexible and fit for purpose model in place to make best use of the resources available.

Allocations will be monitored and evaluated as part of the ongoing work of a school and may change during the course of the session as part of ongoing review processes.

If you have any questions about the project you can contact:

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