

Fact Sheet

Additional Support Needs (ASN) Transformation

Key facts

- All children's needs are at the heart of our education service
- Changes will mean a fairer and more inclusive experience across Highland
- ASN budget has grown by 20% while other services have been cut
- Highland has amongst the highest % of ASN pupils in Scotland
- Savings have been made without any redundancies
- Review of our model will involve parents and pupils
- New training will be provided to enhance staff skills
- Highland will still spend over £35M on ASN during 2019-20

What are we doing?

We have agreed proposals for the transformation of Additional Support Needs (ASN) services as part of a change programme.

Why are we doing this?

A **redesign review** in 2016 identified the need to review how we deliver additional support in schools. The implementation of the findings was agreed within **budget proposals** for 2019-22 by Council on 14th February 2019.

We currently spend around £35 million on ASN, with a staffing establishment of over 1,200 staff and over 12,500 pupils with at least one ASN need and stage, plus a further 144 pupils in our special schools. This is over 41 percent of all our pupils in Secondary and Primary Schools in Highland.

Our core budget for ASN grew by 20 percent between 2012/13 and 2018/19 at a time when most council budgets have reduced and more than £125 million of savings have had to be made across other services to date. The budget saving agreed for this year for ASN staffing represents a reduction of £3.857 million. This includes a reduction of £2.788m for ASN teaching posts; £0.700 million for PSA support and £0.369 million in specialist support including £0.250 million by vacancy management.

How do we compare with elsewhere?

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 percentage of Highland primary pupils identified as ASN is 38 percent compared with a national average of 25 percent. The percentage of Highland secondary pupils with ASN is 44 percent compared with a national average of 32 percent.

Over 5 years (2014-18 inclusive) the total number of pupils in Highland with needs assessed at:

- Level 3 has increased by 28 percent
- Level 4 has increased by 54 percent
- Levels 3 and 4 combined have increased by 37 percent

These high rates and rapid growth in Highland tells us that we need to closely examine our model and practices.

Who have we involved?

In addition to public and staff engagement, there has been extensive engagement with Head Teachers over the past 6 months. In these discussions it has been recognised that the current allocation process requires to be reviewed to make sure there is a fit for purpose process in place that also meets the changing needs of both our children and our school settings.

Head Teachers have been provided with both written and verbal briefings to help them advise Parent Councils and parents and specific engagement with parents will take place through the

schools' normal engagement processes for considering children's need.

Meetings have been taking place with key representative groups and elected members in order to brief them on the process. Following discussions with parents, proposals are being developed for Parent Advocacy Representatives from across the Highlands to be set up to ensure inclusion of the parent voice in the ASN redesign. They will also work with us to develop community partnership approaches to improving networks, support and services for families beyond the school day.

What are we going to do?

An ASN Transformation Project has been set up as part of the Change Programme and progress will be regularly monitored and reported to members.

Our focus is on embedding professional practice and skills within the school system, supporting staff at all levels to identify and respond appropriately to the variety of complex needs in an inclusive and appropriate way.

A comprehensive training programme for all teachers is being developed to continue their ongoing professional development. The training programme will be rolled out from June 2019 to June 2020. The training will focus on building positive relationships, inclusive teaching and neuro-developmental disorders.

A phased approach will be taken to resource allocation, so that it is equitable and targeted to where it is most needed. The ASN allocation for the school year 2019-20 has been completed, based on the existing model. Moving staffing resource between schools 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. The allocation model and processes will be reviewed during 2019 for use from 2020. This review will involve listening to parents and pupils through work with advocacy groups.

What will this mean for children?

Children with ASN will continue to be provided with support in our schools. The Council is investing around £35M in ASN including the investment in special schools during 2019-20.

We aim to design a more effective and inclusive model which will continue to provide the appropriate and consistent levels of support to children to enable them to achieve their best potential.

Pupils with lower levels of identified needs (at levels 1 and 2) will usually be appropriately supported within the classroom by the class teacher, who will use differentiated materials or a range of other identified strategies to make learning accessible. We will continue to target support to those pupils with significant and complex support needs. An evaluation of how we assess children and meet needs will result in better consistency across Highland. This will be carried out as part of our Review during 2019.

What will this mean for staff?

Budget savings have been phased over three years to allow sufficient time to make the necessary changes, and Teachers and 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.

To avoid the need for redundancies, vacancy controls, reallocations, retraining and internal deployment are being used to reconfigure the workforce. We continue to work with Trade Unions to achieve the changes required.

Based on the budget reduction agreed by the Council, there will be a reduction of 63FTE PSA posts and 62FTE ASN teacher posts in 2019/20. There will be over 1,000 PSAs and over 200 ASN Teachers in our workforce working alongside our teachers in primary and secondary schools.

Most of the reduction in PSA posts will be achieved by deleting vacant posts (over 50FTE) and a small number of staff are being deployed into other roles with the Council. We will continue to support PSAs seeking voluntary career changes within the Council and 75 have registered for this support.

Similarly over half of the reduction in ASN teaching posts can be made by deleting vacant posts (over 35FTE). Others are transferring into different teaching roles and will remain part of the Council's teaching workforce.

We have managed the transition for our workforce without any compulsory redundancies and the process has taken place with staff and Trade Union involvement.

Further Sources of information

Primary school ASN: The number of pupils reported with additional support needs (ASN) in primary schools in Highland has increased from 26 percent of the primary school roll to 38 percent during 2014-2018. The figures are 21 percent rising to 27 percent in our benchmark group and 19 percent rising to 25 percent nationally over the same period. Our assessed need is the highest of our benchmark group and has grown at twice the rate elsewhere.

Secondary school ASN: The number of pupils reported with ASN in secondary schools in Highland has more than doubled in the same period, from 21 percent of the secondary roll to 44 percent. The figures are 21 percent rising to 34 percent in our benchmark group and 21 percent rising to 32 percent nationally. Our assessed need is the highest of our benchmark group and well above the national rate.

The number of pupils reported in primary and secondary schools combined with ASN has grown from 24 percent to 41 percent. The comparative figures for our benchmark group show an increase from 21 percent to 30 percent and a rise from 20 percent to 28 percent nationally.

Special schools: These figures exclude the pupils in our special schools. In 2018 our special schools' roll is 144. Some councils do not have special schools, so their figures are included in the Scottish average figures above, making our comparative rates even higher.

Our benchmark group of councils for comparison includes:

- Angus
- Argyll and Bute
- East Lothian
- Midlothian
- Moray

- Scottish Borders
- Stirling

The benchmark groups take into account relative deprivation and affluence (key drivers of educational outcomes) and the type of area (e.g. rural, semi-rural, urban). For indicators relating to children and social work the benchmark group for The Highland Council is Group 2 where Local Authorities in Group 1 are the least deprived, and Group 4 are the most deprived.