

**Highland Council: Questions: 14 May 2026**

**Public Question**

**1. Mr R Polson**

**To the Leader of the Council**

What steps are Highland Council taking to ensure a range of intergenerational housing is provided - including bungalows - in all new Council and private housing developments in the Region?

**RESPONSE**

National and Highland planning policies encourage diversity of tenure, housing types and housing designs to suit a range of occupants. The Council currently operates a quota policy (Policy 13 Accessible and Adaptable Homes of the IMFLDP2) which requires a minimum of 5% of all dwellings across the Inner Moray Firth to have a "wheelchair liveable" ground floor on sites of 50 or more residential units. Future changes to Scottish Building Standards may require all accommodation to achieve the higher wheelchair liveable rather simply accessible standard. This change should make far more accommodation suitable for the needs of older and/or disabled residents.

For the Council's social housing build programme, all the homes built meet the Housing for Varying Needs Standard, with the minimum standard including that 2 storey properties are designed to accommodate ground floor showers should this be a future requirement and level access is provided to the property. In larger 4-bedroom properties, consideration is always given to whether a ground floor bedroom is required and could be accommodated. On larger sites a number of this type are included, in consultation with Housing Management.

The Council aims to incorporate 20% full wheelchair accessible homes on every site – higher than the Housing for Varying Need standard of 10%. This is not always achievable due to site constraints.

All ground floor properties are designed with accessibility in mind with the opportunity to incorporate level access showers and enlarging doorways to allow for wheelchair manoeuvrability.

To increase wheelchair provision, we design some ground floor flats to meet this standard with the upstairs properties being available for general needs accommodation.

## Member Questions

### 1. Mr A Christie

#### To the Leader of the Council

Please could the Leader provide information regarding violent incidents or incidents where there has been deemed a threat of risk to persons wellbeing, that have been recorded in our schools in the Academic years 2023/24, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 (to the Easter break if available). Please can the answer provide data as to what level of establishment (Primary or secondary etc) the incident occurred at, the number of incidents by establishment type, whether the incident related to pupils only or pupils and teachers and any other information that is relevant to answer and inform the question.

#### **RESPONSE**

Staff log whether an incident is verbal, physical or both, but it is not recorded whether these are violent or present a risk to a person, nor is this a requirement for logging an incident.

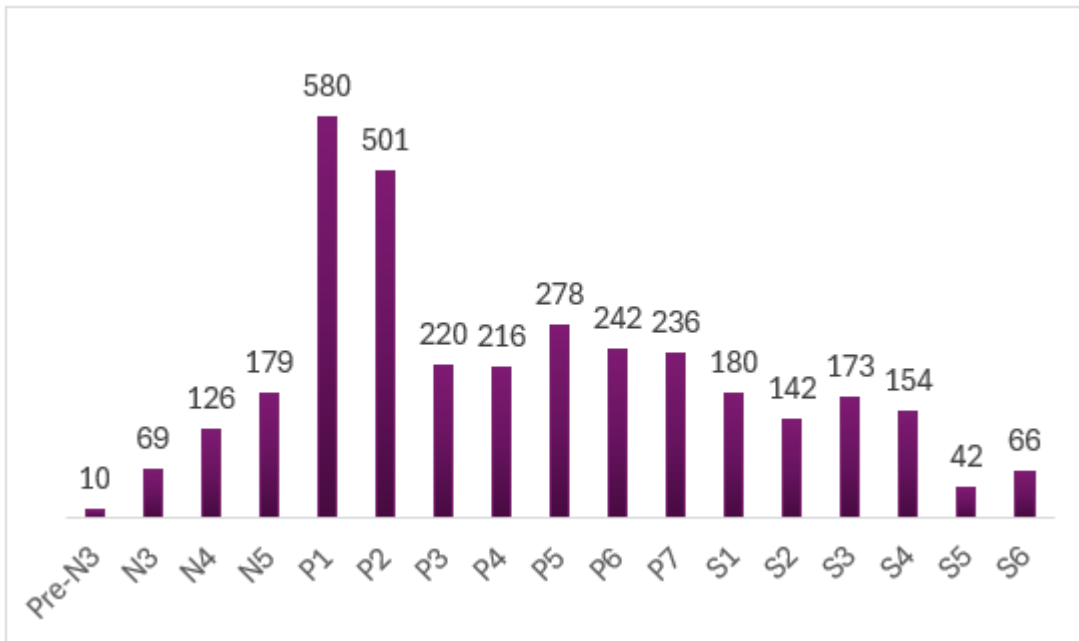
A physical incident may involve only the individual pupil themselves and/or an object of some sort. The latter includes examples of things being thrown such as a sock, a pencil, Lego and so on and are more representative of a child experiencing frustration than an intention to be violent or harm another individual. This is borne out by the largest number of incidents being in P1 - P3, and at points of transition, then tapering down as children mature and become more comfortable in the school environment.

We also know that the same incident can be reported several times, depending on how many staff have witnessed it, so the number of reports are not representative of the actual number of incidents. The Education Service is working with union representatives to review the current reporting system to identify improvements to address some of these issues.

This is not intended to play down the impact that incidents have on staff or suggest that some cases are not more serious than others. The safety and wellbeing of our staff is of paramount importance. However, it is important to provide context that an entry in the system does not in itself necessarily represent a serious violent incident and that all of the incidents reported represent fewer than 2% of children in Highland schools.

2023-24

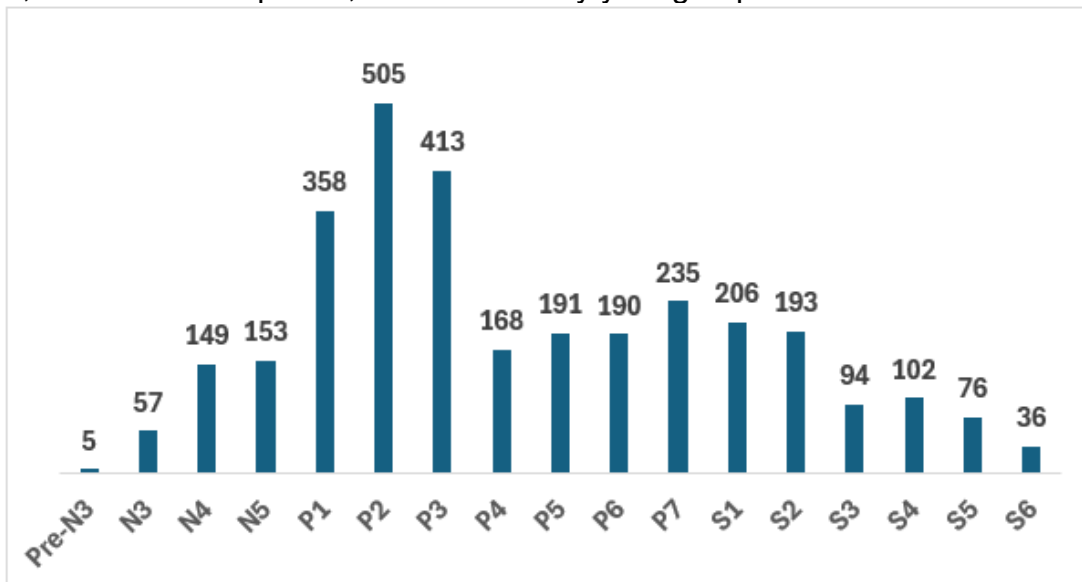
3,414 incidents reported, broken down by year group:



- These incidents involved 613 individual pupils, which represents 2.02% of the school population in 2023-24
- 85% of these incidents involved children and young people with one or more identified ASfL need
- 57% of incidents were reported by a Pupil Support Assistant

2024-25

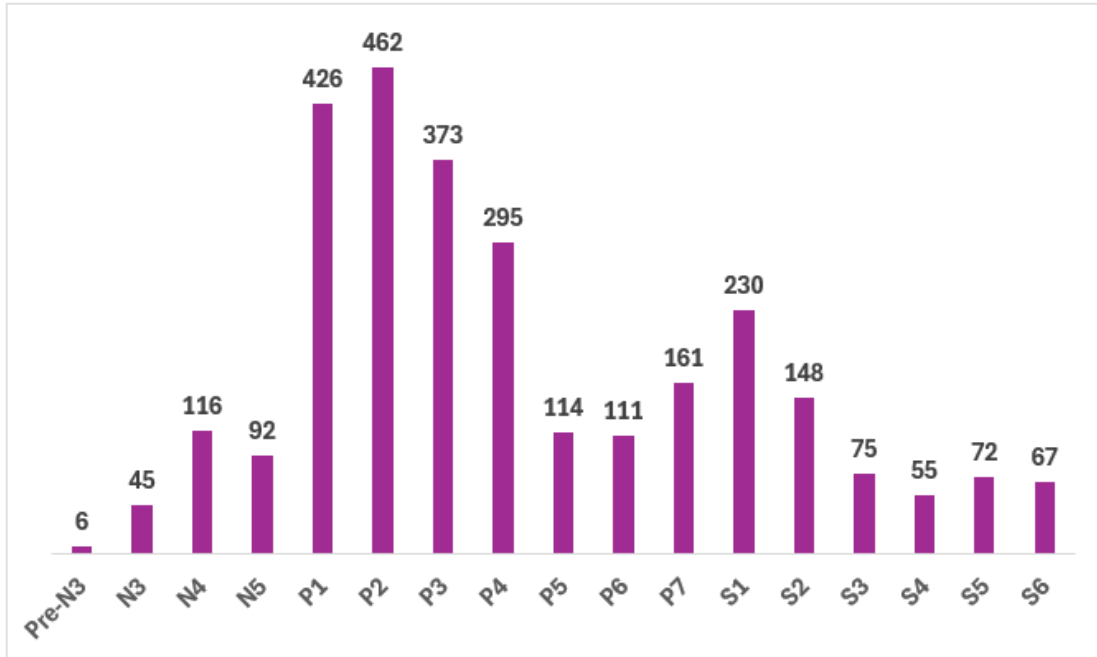
3,131 incidents reported, broken down by year group:



- These incidents involved 628 individual pupils, which represents 2.1% of the school population in 2024-25
- 84% of these incidents involved children and young people with one or more identified ASfL need
- 57% of incidents were reported by a Pupil Support Assistant

2024-25

2,848 incidents reported during Terms 1, 2 & 3, broken down by year group:



- These incidents involved 548 individual pupils, which represents 1.87% of the school population this session
- 83% of these incidents involved children and young people with one or more identified ASfL need
- 59% of incidents were reported by a Pupil Support Assistant

Staff log whether an incident is verbal, physical or both but it is not recorded whether these are violent in nature. A physical incident may involve only the individual pupil themselves and/or an object of some sort. The latter includes examples of things being thrown such as a sock, a pencil, Lego and so on and are more representative of a child experiencing frustration than an intention to be violent or harm another individual. This is borne out by the largest number of incidents being in P1 - P3 and then tapering down quickly as children mature and become more comfortable in the school environment.

## 2. Mr A Christie

### To the Leader of the Council

On the 14 May 2025 the following email was sent to all Members sent on behalf of the Chief Executive.

*“Dear Members,*

#### ***Member Service Standards - Member Correspondence and Enquiries***

*I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on concerns and issues raised at the recent Members Spring event held on 24 April 2025. In particular, the delay in responses from officers or lack of response to Members enquires and/or requests for information.*

*We recognise the frustration this causes and have therefore introduced a new approach to ensure that there are clear expectations on timescales for responses to Members. This is also applicable to staff. This aligns with our new approach recently agreed within the **Customer Experience Strategy** to have clear customer service standards for the organisation.*

*The service standards for Member response are as follows:*

- *General question/enquiry – response to be provided within **5 working days***
- *Complex enquiry/question – response to be provided within **20 working days***

*Please note that the definition of a complex enquiry is one where analysis is needed or there is a need to gather information from a range of sources before this can be provided. If staff believe that the enquiry is complex, they have been advised that they must communicate this to the individual Member within 5 working days along with a date for the final response.*

#### ***Definition***

*This approach is for general questions or requests for information members may have for officers. Please note that this process does not replace the normal process for complaints/requests for service that are in place. It is important that Members should continue to log complaints/requests for service through the Council’s website forms, or signpost constituents to this route or the service centre/service points if they are unable to do so online. However, where no response has been received and this has been escalated to you, raising with officers in this manner is quite acceptable and in line with current practice.*

#### ***Escalation process***

*Should you be unhappy with either the response provided, the classification of the general/complex enquiry or that the officer concerned has not responded, then this should be escalated to the line manager of the officer concerned in the first instance. Should this response be unsatisfactory, this should be escalated to the relevant area manager/service lead.*

*This approach has been shared across staff teams.”*

A year on from the email Please can the Leader advise what progress has been made to achieve the targets set in the email and how this has been measured?

## **RESPONSE**

Since the Member Service Standards were introduced, progress has been made to introduce a more consistent and measurable approach to handling Member enquiries, while reinforcing that the established complaints and service request routes remain the primary mechanism for operational matters. Members should continue to signpost constituents to these established routes such as through the Council's website.

For Members only, the Member Enquiry process that has been piloted within the Place Cluster is now complete. The intention is to roll-out this process and a communication will be issued to all Members when this goes live.

The Member Enquiry Process is intended for general questions or requests for information, and for cases where no response has been received through the standard channels, for example reporting an issue through the online form on the Council's website. This new enquiry process may also be used to escalate to officers, when appropriate.

During the pilot 106 Member enquiries were logged with 69 receiving a response within 5 working days, 11 within 20 working days, and 26 took longer than 20 working days.

It is intended that individual reports will be provided to Members setting out the enquiries they have raised and the status of each on a regular basis.