

## The Highland Council

### Education, Children and Adult Services Committee 20 January 2016

Agenda Item	13.
Report No	ECAS 09/16

#### Face up to Child Poverty – EIS Report

#### Report by Director of Care and Learning

##### Summary

This report introduces a report published by the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), with advice to its members in schools and colleges, on how to 'poverty-proof' learning and teaching in the classroom.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 There is a powerful and focussed local and national commitment, to close the attainment gap for children living in the most disadvantaged communities. This recognises that children who grow up in poverty experience many disadvantages, with multiple, negative impacts on their outcomes, including in health, cognitive development, psychosocial development and educational attainment.
- 1.2 The EIS has issued new advice to teachers and lecturers in schools and colleges on how to 'poverty-proof' learning and teaching in the classroom, following an EIS survey which asked their members to share experiences of the impact of poverty on their pupils and students.
- 1.3 The booklet entitled 'Face up to Child Poverty' has been circulated to Committee members and can be accessed at [http://www.eis.org.uk/Campaigns/Child\\_poverty.htm](http://www.eis.org.uk/Campaigns/Child_poverty.htm) Further copies will be available at the Committee.

#### 2. Face up to Child Poverty Report

- 2.1 The new advice, which has been prepared by the EIS Equality Committee, was sent to all schools and colleges in Scotland in September 2015.
- 2.2 Commenting on the launch of the advice, EIS Equality Convener Bill Ramsay said, "The EIS is absolutely committed to taking all realistic practical steps to reduce the impact of poverty on the young people in our classrooms. This new booklet, which has been written by teaching professionals and based on the first-hand experiences of teachers and lecturers working with young people across Scotland, offers useful guidance for teaching staff and advice on poverty-proofing class activity and home study assignments. The guide also addresses key issues such as uniform policies, educational excursions and access to information technology and examines the financial pressure that can be placed on families as a result."
- 2.3 EIS General Secretary Larry Flanagan said; "The fact that food poverty now affects such a large, and growing, section of society should shame those in government and elsewhere who continue to push the damaging and divisive austerity-above-all agenda."

2.4 “Schools and colleges are part of society, and so are not immune from the problems of that wider society. Working alone, educational establishments cannot eradicate poverty or eliminate completely its negative impact on young people. However, teachers and lecturers can and do make a very real difference in the lives of the young people that they work with on a day to day basis. Our hope is that, by offering this booklet to all schools and colleges, teachers and lecturers will give even greater consideration to how poverty affects their pupils and students. The poverty-proofing measures suggested in the guide can, we hope, assist teaching professionals in trying to mitigate, as far as possible, the impact of low incomes on young people’s educational experience.”

### **3. Implications**

#### **3.1 Resources**

3.1.1 ASN and mainstream school budgets are deployed to support children from disadvantaged communities. The EIS advice provides additional information for all schools.

3.1.2 The Scottish Attainment Challenge is providing additional funding to five school communities over the next three years. Highland Council will also have the support of a team of Attainment Advisors across the Northern Partnership of Local Authorities, which is supported by this fund.

#### **3.2 Equalities, Gaelic and Rural**

3.2.1 There can be particular challenges in relation to disadvantage within rural communities, and one of the workstreams for the Attainment Advisors will be to support Highland Schools to address rural deprivation. This work will also need to take account of children in Gaelic Medium Education.

#### **3.3 Legal, Risk and Climate Change/Carbon Clever**

3.3.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

<h3><b>4 Recommendation</b></h3>
<p>4.1 Members are invited to consider and comment on the issues raised in this report.</p>

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 8 January 2016

Author: Bill Alexander, Director of Care and Learning