

Agenda Item	<b>9.</b>
Report No	<b>CC/11/21</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Caithness Committee

**Date:** 22 April 2021

**Report Title:** Additional Support Needs Provision in Caithness

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Additional Support for Learning and provision within Caithness, giving information on:
- Additional Support for Learning, Scottish context;
  - additional Support for Learning, Highland context;
  - Highland Additional Support for Learning allocation procedures and processes; and
  - Caithness levels of need, staffing, procedures and processes.
- 1.2 Additional Support for Learning (ASL) has replaced Additional Support Needs (ASN).

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to: scrutinise and note the content of the report.

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - All work will be managed within budget allocations.
- 3.2 **Legal** - Statutory requirements are met as necessary.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – N/A
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – N/A
- 3.5 **Risk** - N/A
- 3.6 **Gaelic** - Where GME/GLE is delivered in schools, we continue to support and further develop this.

#### **4. Additional Support for Learning review, Scottish context.....**

4.1 A review led by Angela Morgan of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL) in schools was announced in January 2019. The remit of the review was to consider the implementation of the legislation: across early learning and childcare centres, primary, secondary and special schools; the quality of learning and support; the different approaches to planning and assessment; the roles and responsibilities of support staff; and the areas of practice that could be further enhanced through better use of current resources to support practice, staffing or other aspects of provision.

4.2 A number of recommendations were made within 9 themes.

- Vision and visibility
- Mainstreaming and inclusion
- Maintaining focus, but overcoming fragmentation
- Resources
- Workforce development and support
- Relationships between schools and parents
- Relationships and behaviour
- Understanding Rights
- Assurance mechanisms

#### **5. Additional Support for Learning, Highland context.....**

5.1 Linking into the Education & Learning Service Improvement Plan and ASL Transformation Project, Highland are running parallel with implementing the **9 themes:**

1. Training will be arranged for school staff firstly to correctly input data into SEEMiS and secondly to support the quality assurance process of managing such data for ASL children and young people from February 2021. Multi agency meetings will be held quarterly to agree data and allocate resource and recommendations;
2. The child plan moderation process which took place once a year will be reviewed. It will become part of the validated self-evaluation process for schools to take more ownership and moderate need across the Associated Schools Group. A working group will be commissioned to look at the child plan process, to reduce bureaucracy in line with the ASL review;
3. A termly assessment framework of how well The Highland Council are meeting the needs of pupils with ASL will be planned. Consultation of this new approach with head teachers and key stakeholders will take place in January/early February 2021;
4. The ASG model of distribution of additional staffing resource and agreement of priority needs will continue to be embedded across the whole of Highland, thus empowering HTs to make local decisions to support local needs. A future good practice event will be organised for Members;
5. Monthly separate network meetings for all additional support needs teachers and PT ASN/Guidance and DHTs of pupil support are planned in order to provide training, share resources and good practice. This builds on previous network meetings for principal teachers of ASN, which happened termly;
6. Review of the consistency of the allocation of resource between the 4 areas will take place on a monthly basis;
7. Review of The Highland Council's inclusion policy and practice;

8. Review in line with the SG ASL plan, including the PSA and support teacher role and remit with the support and involvement of trade unions; and
9. Development of a year-round engagement programme with parents and partners to ensure a whole system approach to ASL.

## 5.2 Highland ASL Allocations Procedures and Processes

The following information will be circulated to schools by the start of Summer term:

1. ASG Meeting Agenda
2. Timeline
3. ASG Proposed Allocation Process 2019 (for information)
4. Updated statement on ASG ASL allocation
5. LNCT 28 Procedure for Transfer of Surplus Teaching Staff
6. Sharing good practice

## 5.3 Timeline

Date:	Action:
ASAP	This email and attachments to go to HTs – re SEEMis uplift, Additional Information Sheets and Level 3 and 4 Child Plans.
19/2/21	SEEMis uplift of ASN data
Weekly	Ongoing union meetings
26/2/21	Additional information sheets and Level 3 and 4 plans to be sent to area.
4/3/21	Budget approved at Council
March 21	ASN Managers/Officers to moderate need in their area, preparation based on expected budget – invitation for HT involvement
	Explanation of allocation process at Area HT meetings
	Approval by THC Executive Leadership Team
31/3/21	Diary dates for ASG meetings in May sent out by ASN Managers
1/4/21 – 23/4/21	Areas receive their Budget information and work on its implications
4/5/21 – 21/5/21	Meetings in areas to allocate the resource available and options for how they could organise the ASNTs/PSAs their ASG have and empower them to decide at an ASG level how to deploy the staff.
24-5-21	HT use the script with their PSA staff using the correct sections depending on the agreed allocation from the ASG discussions.
May-June	ASGs liaise with their staff so all schools and staff are aware of their deployment for August 21.
June additional INSET	Engagements with PSAs and ASNTs

## 6. Caithness Levels of Need, Staffing, Procedures and Processes

6.1 In line with Highland developments, processes and practices are being developed in Caithness.

### 6.2 Environments for ASN Provision:

6.2.1 Airport House, Wick - This is for Thurso and Wick secondary aged pupils who have particular difficulties attending school. The capacity is about 12 young people who attend part-time. The staff also do outreach work. The staff at Airport House support the young people to have opportunities to develop in all areas of their life; socially, emotionally and academically.

6.2.2 Primary Enhanced Provisions -These are at Mount Pleasant Primary School and Newton Park Primary School. They are for pupils with severe and complex needs. When appropriate, as individuals they would join other pupils in the school for activities etc. The capacity of these is 8 pupils.

- 6.2.3 Secondary Enhanced Provisions - These are at the two high schools. They are for pupils with severe and complex needs. When appropriate, as individuals they would join other pupils in the school for activities etc. The capacity of these is 8 pupils.
- 6.2.4 SCOPE@ Miller and SCOPE@Noss (**S**ocial **C**ommunication **P**rovision for **E**ducation) - Pupils who have a place at SCOPE have neurodevelopmental difficulties such as autism but have the potential to be full-time pupils at their local schools. The purpose of SCOPE is to help their development so that their attendance at their local school can gradually increase and they no longer attend SCOPE part-time.
- 6.2.5 At Mount Pleasant School there is a Nurture Room to support pupils emotionally and socially. This was developed and is run by the school as part of the PEF funded work they do.

### 6.3 Levels of Need

Number of children and young people at level 3 and 4 (percentage within Sutherland, Caithness and Highland).

NORTH AREA 21-22 FIGURES			20/21 & 21/22	
	LEV	LEV	LEVEL	LEVEL
DORNOCH	25	14	5	5
GOLSPIE	25	22	-2	6
NORTH COAST	6	2	1	0
NORTH WEST 3-18	4	3	2	0
THURSO	70	31	-7	-17
WICK	79	39	7	10
<b>NORTH AREA</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

21-22 FIGURES AS % OF THE SCHOOL			
	LEV	LEV	LEVEL
DORNOCH	5.8%	3.2%	9.0%
GOLSPIE	4.1%	3.6%	7.7%
NORTH COAST	3.6%	1.2%	4.8%
NORTH WEST 3-18	4.5%	3.4%	8.0%
THURSO	3.8%	1.7%	5.5%
WICK	4.3%	2.1%	6.4%
<b>NORTH AREA</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
HIGHLAND	5.7%	3.6%	9.3%

- 6.3.1 Pupils who have additional needs which school staff consider to be Level 1 or Level 2 should be supported within the class by the class teachers adjusting the management of the class and approaches to learning and teaching. Therefore, pupils with these lower level of additional needs are not factored into the current model for allocating ASN staff to schools.

### 6.4 Number of ASN teachers and PSA's

#### 6.4.1 Teachers:

Thurso - 8.5 FTE, 7 permanent staff plus 3 supply staff currently covering vacancies  
 Wick - 9 FTE 11 permanent staff plus 0.1 FTE supply

#### 6.4.2 PSA's:

Thurso - 34.4 FTE posts (946 hours a week) 50 employees  
 Wick - 40.4 FTE posts (1112 hours a week) 60 employees

- 6.5 **Wick and Thurso ASG Allocation Meetings (Thurso 4<sup>th</sup> May and Wick 12<sup>th</sup> May)**  
Attendees: ASG Head Teachers; ASN manager and officer; Educational Psychologist; other members of the area management team who are available.
- 6.5.1 The ASN Manager and ASN Officer, a week before the arranged meetings, will send the HTs a summary of the current ASL staffing overview and level 3 and 4 pupil numbers for coming session. The staffing will be broken down into permanent staff, fixed term staff, supply staff and vacancies. We use temporary contracts to help manage vacancies and give some flexibility based on changing needs. This allows head teachers to be informed of the ASG picture before the meeting.
- 6.5.2 Pre meeting information will also include:
- the staffing allocation for the ASG for 2021/2022.
  - confirmation of approximately how much resource has to be top sliced for specialist/area wide provisions / Out Of Area (OOA) and Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC).
  - How this translates into available funding for SFL staff within the ASG.
- 6.5.3 At the meeting:
- The ASN manager will suggest an equitable distribution of SFL staff for levels of need in each school within the ASG for this coming academic year. This will provide a starting point to discussions.
  - Consideration of pooling of resources across the ASG to develop ASG wide specialist approaches. (for example, the ASG may decide to have a focus on nurturing).
  - Clarification of any required cessation of fixed term or supply arrangements as required and/or deployment of staff.
  - The ASN manager and officer will answer any queries raised and note the detail of decisions made.
- 6.5.4 Base school Head Teachers will communicate with ASN staff on the agreed date, allowing all staff across Highland to hear of any changes at the same time.
- 6.5.5 The following link will allow you to hear some of our Highland schools who have previously used the ASG model, sharing their good practice:  
[ASG ASN Allocation Video March '21 – YouTube](#)

## 7. **Caithness Challenges**

- 7.1 Two years ago members approved savings that are being implemented as part of the 2021/22 budget. In the North area we currently anticipate that implementing this decision means we need to reduce by 3 full time equivalent PSA posts (equivalent to 82.5 hours) and 2 full time equivalent ASL teaching posts. These numbers are based on our share of the Highland wide ASL budget. (The ASN manager will work out the specific % of reduction on teachers and PSAs when he receives the final budget allocation).
- 7.2 Vacancies for ASN teaching posts in Thurso is a concern. The allocation for Thurso is 8.5 FTE and at present we have 3.4 FTE vacancies. 2 FTE have been requested for advert since February 2020, one is the class teacher post at Scope and the other mainstream. 1.4 subsequent vacancies have not been requested for advert as ASN posts were not to be currently advertised. This equates to 40% of the ASN allocation for teachers in Thurso. In December 2021 the class teacher in the Enhanced Provision at Mount Pleasant is retiring and therefore this will also need to be filled. A number of teachers have been covering the vacancies on a supply basis. The teacher covering the SCOPE class is interested and seems suitable to fill that post in a more permanent basis.

## **8. Mitigations**

### **8.1 Staff Development**

The Highland Council has started implementing a 9-step process. One aspect of this work is developing the skills and knowledge of all staff within schools as well as specialist ASN staff etc. This should enable all staff to support young people with additional needs more effectively and efficiently.

### **8.2 Deployment of staff to different schools within ASGs**

Historically support staff have been reluctant to move from one school to another. We will be continuing to support transition through clarity that they are employed to the Area ASL team and not to an individual school. When staff are required to move to another school induction visits are also arranged.

### **8.3 ASN teacher vacancies**

The vacant ASN teacher posts have been covered on a supply basis and therefore, logistically it is easier for some of these arrangements to be ended to allow for the reduction from August 2021. Looking at equity of provision, there could be the required reduction of 2 ASN teacher posts in Caithness and this could be balanced across the whole of Caithness by ASN teaching staff moving from the Wick ASG. Some of the ASN teaching staff in Wick do reside in the Thurso ASG.

8.4 If the course of action above is followed, this means that the class teacher posts for SCOPE@Miller and in December at the Enhanced Provision class at Mount Pleasant can be filled like any mainstream class teacher posts. As there is a very suitable teacher at SCOPE, if the temporary arrangement there could be made more permanent or if the post was advertised; this would provide the critical continuity and consistency particularly required by pupils with neuro developmental differences. We have not been able to provide this since November 2019 when the previous post holder became unwell.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning

Date: 16 April 2021

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