

# Support for Learning Review

## Quarter 3 - Progress Report

### Context

#### **Background**

The number of children and young people in Shetland with an additional support need has increased significantly along with increasing complexity of educational needs. This is a similar picture across Scotland. Locally, there is a broad range of experiences, views, and expectations about how best to support our children and young people within the current context. The Audit Scotland report highlights systemic challenges in planning, funding, and delivering additional support for learning (ASL), which are reflected locally. This has led to a need for a strategic review of support for learning. This review will ensure Shetland's provision is responsive, sustainable, and aligned with best practice.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Support for Learning Review is to evaluate current practices, identify gaps, and recommend improvements to ensure inclusive, effective, and equitable education for all learners. The review supports strategic goals for inclusive education and continuous improvement in service delivery, in line with statutory duties.

#### **Objectives**

- Identify effective practices benefitting children, young people, and their families.
- Highlight existing challenges and gaps in provision which negatively impact on children, young people, and their families.
- Develop recommendations for improvement.

### Key Developments

#### Project Management

The Support for Learning (SfL) Review remains in the final stages of initiation, with considerable progress made on governance documentation, stakeholder preparation, and establishment of core processes. Although most workstreams are preparing to move into analysis, the Workforce workstream is already generating early recommendations. This early progress is being used to inform the wider review approach.

Project Managers have been trained in PRINCE2 methodology and are now applying the principles to the Review. Key management documents have been developed and will to be presented to the Project Board for approval on 09.02.26. These are:

- Project Initiation Document
- Risk Management Strategy
- Communication Strategy
- Quality Management Approach (if applicable)
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Updated Project Plan

Project governance has been established, including:

- Six-weekly meetings with the Director of Children's Services
- Identification of workstream leads identified and workstream plans being developed for workforce and policy/guidance workstreams.
- Tools and templates created (risk register, consultation log etc.)

Foundations for engagement are being developed, including:

- Draft consultation plan
- Engagement materials
- Engagement channels (email address, SIC website page to follow)

### **Consultation, Engagement and Data Collection**

Post-school transitions consultation has been conducted. This involved visits to schools, public hall and online meetings arranged and attended. The consultation has shaped the development of the policy, which was approved by Members and provided an opportunity to test consultation methods. This learning will be used as the Review moves forward.

Views gathered from an extensive Workforce Survey has been fully analysed and feedback on the key findings is being provided to the staff who were involved. Key findings will be used within the workstreams to shape future recommendations.

Extensive data collection and analysis of current ASN provision is being undertaken. This is helping to develop a clearer understanding of what is working well and what issues need to be addressed.

### **Workstreams**

The review's workstreams continue to be refined and leads have been identified for each.

#### **Workforce Workstream (Advanced Progress)**

- Scoping complete.
- Undertaken evidence gathering.
- Completed early analysis.
- Developed a draft set of recommendations.
- Support for Learning Qualifications and Training pathways developed.
- Induction packs for support workers being developed by Project Managers.
- Draft job specifications have been developed for:
  - Teacher – Support for Learning
  - Support Worker – Support for Learning
  - Practitioner – Support for Learning
  - Senior Practitioner – Support for Learning
- Job evaluations are now being undertaken.
- Engagement with Professional Associations will be planned.
- Equity of teacher input for children with very complex needs who do not attend a Special Unit has been identified as a particular issue. A proposal to address this is being prepared and there is an aspiration to have this implemented by the start of the next academic year.

### Other Workstreams

- Workstreams are currently refining scope.
- Preparing evidence collection activities
- Aligning approach with lessons emerging from Workforce Workstream.
- Data requests and consultation planning underway.

### Policy and Guidance Workstream

- Stakeholders identified for Policy/Guidance workstream.
- Priorities for the workstream and draft action plan developed.
- Policies relating to Support for Learning has been collated and a reading and review programme will be developed.

### Provision and Resourcing Workstream

- An Action Plan has been developed from on '*A Lessons Learned Investigation into Shetland Islands Council Enhanced Provision Strategy*' and is being implemented.
- Audit information has been requested from schools and a Quality Assurance exercise is being undertaken to ensure consistency and accuracy of information.

### Transitions Workstream

- Post-school transitions consultation conducted – visits to schools, public hall and online meetings arranged and attended.

### **Next Steps**

- Moving out of initiation phase into stage 2 of the project.
- First workstream meeting for Policy/Guidance date set.
- Project Managers attending Learning Festival at Brae High School on 17.02.26 for further consultation with staff.
- Dates set with identified schools with examples of good practice and case study templates created.
- Further consultation.
- Continued involvement in action planning for enhanced provision.
- Data planning completed and mapping template populated.

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