

Progress Update - Support for Learning Review

April 2026

The Support for Learning (SfL) Review is managed using PRINCE2 methodology. The project has moved from the *initiation* stage into the *directing and managing the project* stage. The Support for Learning Project Board continues to meet to provide high-level oversight and support escalated issues and key decisions. A Project Team meets regularly to oversee the direction of the review and assist with operational aspects.

Workforce

Following extensive consultation with the local Support for Learning Workforce, **advanced progress** has been made in relation to workforce development priorities.

Additional Support Teachers / Additional Support Teachers (Intensive Support)

New job profiles for Additional Support Teachers and Additional Support Teachers (Intensive Support) have been created. These have been agreed by relevant professional associations. The Additional Support Teacher (Intensive Support) is a new role focussed providing high quality learning for children and young people with complex needs. Additional Support Teachers (Intensive Support) will be allocated on a cluster basis to meet the needs of learners. Recruitment for these posts is imminent and reflect the latest national statutory guidance (Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice Fourth Edition 2026) intervention levels.

Expected implementation date – August 2026

Changes to Contractual Arrangements

Current contractual arrangements for support staff makes it challenging to find adequate time for training, planning, consultation and transition work outside of direct learner contact time. A business case, setting out the rationale and possible options for allocating additional time for training, planning and consultation to contracts, is being prepared. Consultation will be held with professional associations and staff, which will begin in May 2026 and run into next session.

Expected implementation date – January 2027

Roles, Remits and Career Progression

Draft job profiles and specifications have been created alongside a potential career structure. This is being progressed by officers in Children's Services and Human Resources through an organisational restructure. This will involve further consultation with staff and professional associations. Further details of the consultation and timescales for will be shared next session.

Expected implementation date – August 2027

Policy and Guidance

A workstream group has been initiated and is **making progress**. Workstream members are reviewing and prioritising next steps for ASN related policies and guidance. A workstream plan is being developed as the workstream refines its action plan.

Admissions, Resourcing and Planning

Policy and guidance relating to admissions, resourcing and planning have been prioritised by the group. This includes reviewing admission arrangements to Shetland's two Special Units at Bell's Brae and Anderson High School.

Expected implementation date – January 2027

Provision and Resourcing

A group has been meeting regularly to take forward the recommendations made within the '*A Lessons Learned Investigation into Shetland Islands Council Enhanced Provision Strategy*.' Many of the recommendations from the investigations have been pulled into the scope of the Support for Learning Review.

A piece of work ongoing is the development of an accessibility strategy and an update to the accessibility design brief. Collegiate working of central officers, school leaders and staff are, and will continue to be, essential in formulating these reference points.

There have also been clear benefits to school estate and assets team members spending time in settings to reflect on how best to utilise and enhance physical resources to better meet the needs of learners.

The use of the Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE) resource to support inclusive learning and collaboration spotlights tools for professionals. It includes an Inclusive Classroom Scale and Participation Scale for the identification of changes required and to support the measurement of progress. CIRCLE continues to inform the physical and social environment as well as structures and routines.

Stakeholder Engagement and Data Analysis

Stakeholder engagement is a core theme throughout the work of the Support for Learning Review and **good progress** is being made with this.

In addition to the workforce engagement that took place in August 2025, a Shetland wide consultation on Support for Learning is underway. This includes:

- Consultation with families through a blended and accessible approach including one to one meetings, an online and paper survey, drop-in sessions.
- A children and young people survey.
- Internal Engagement (Council Staff) with stakeholders from school staff, education service staff and wider council colleagues (e.g. Social Work, Educational Psychology, Human Resources, Adult Services, Youth and Employability Services, other specialist roles).
- Focus groups are being pulled together as required to provide feedback on particular aspects of the review.
- A data working group has been established to manage and collate data.

Implementation date – May 2026