

Progress Update – Support for Learning Review

July 2026

Context

The Support for Learning (SfL) Review is managed using PRINCE2 methodology. The project is now in the *directing and managing the project* stage. The Support for Learning Project Board continues to meet on a regular basis to provide high-level oversight and support escalated issues and key decisions.

Key Developments

- The Project Board met on 9 June 2026 and updated documentation was approved. The Board considered the project milestones, and it was agreed that the consultation analysis phase be extended until October 2026 due to officer capacity and the volume of information being collated.
- The consultation with parents and carers started on 11 May 2026. An extensive round of face-to-face events were held across Shetland with a good level of engagement.
- The parents and carers survey received 185 responses and the information from these are being collated and analysed.
- Pupil Voice events and a survey for pupils is ongoing. Two hundred and twenty-two primary school pupils have completed the survey. A consultation took place with young people from across Shetland at the Youth Summit on 20 May 2026.
- Focus groups and individual meetings are ongoing.
- Further staff consultation is being planned.

Project Governance

- Regular meetings taking place with the Director of Education and Children's Services.
- The Project Team meets regularly to oversee the direction of the review and assist with operational aspects.
- Workstream plans have been developed for workforce and policy/guidance workstreams.
- Ongoing information gathering with a range of education staff, with concerns and suggestions being actioned appropriately. The issues report identifies the full range of issues, highlights overlaps and supports consistent analysis.
- Extensive data collection continues to be undertaken and some analysis on current ASN provision is being used to inform the work of the workstreams.
- A data analysis group is working to assist project managers with the management and collation of data.

Workforce Workstream (Advanced Progress)

- The Support for Learning Workforce survey showed clear support for career progression. A draft structure has been worked up, including draft job profiles. It has been identified by the workstream that this piece of work is an organisational restructure.
- The survey also identified that current working arrangements and contracts make it very challenging for Learning Support Workers to engage in training and professional dialogue, and this directly impacts on staff wellbeing, feeling valued, and the quality of service we can provide to

children and young people. Key members of staff from Education & Learning and Human Resources are working on a solution to this and will engage in consultation, aiming to have the solution in place during school session 2026-2027.

- It was also highlighted through survey responses that learning support staff feel they need further specialised support and direction to effectively meet the needs of children with additional support needs and complex needs. To support in this area, Education and Learning staff have been completed job profiles for Intensive Support Teachers, as well as guidance on how these teachers will be allocated. These posts are now in the recruitment process.
- Further consultation with the affected staff is now being planned. This will give staff the opportunity to review and share feedback on revised job profiles, career progression route and options for increased working hours. Consultation activities are intended to take place across school terms 2 and 3.
- A Job Profile and Person Specification for a new post, Additional Support Teacher – Intensive Support, has been developed and agreed with union colleagues. A first round of recruitment for eight posts was undertaken at the end of the academic session with a number of experienced candidates being appointed. A second round of recruitment is underway to fill the remaining posts.

Policy and Guidance Workstream

- The workstream is now established. 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.
- The Admissions Policy has been updated and is being presented to the Education and Families Committee in August 2026 for approval.

Provision and Resourcing Workstream

- An Accessibility Strategy has been developed and is being presented to the Education and Families Committee in August 2026 for approval.
- Learning Estate Strategy has been updated to reflect the recommendations from the '*Lessons Learned Investigation into Shetland Islands Council Enhanced Provision Strategy: with reference to Aith Junior High School – November 2025.*'

Next Steps

- Workstreams will continue to move forward through their action plans and will be supported by the SfL Review Project Managers where appropriate and to ensure alignment with the goals of the review.
- Follow up consultation with Learning Support Workers/Assistants is being planned for school terms 2 and 3.
- Consultation with remaining stakeholders is being planned for September and October 2026.
- Data analysis of the information gathered from the parent and carer consultation will take place in from July – October.