

Item: 8

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 8 September 2021.

School Counselling Service.

Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the establishment of a schools counselling service.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, in March 2020, the Scottish Government published guidance for education authorities on counselling in schools.

2.2.

That, supported by specific funding, the aim of the Scottish Government was to establish a universal service for all children and young people aged 10 and over.

2.3.

That Scottish Government funding, amounting to £166,000, has been allocated towards in-school counselling in Orkney for 2021/22.

2.4.

That a part-time in-school counselling service has been available within Orkney's senior secondary schools for some time, which was originally established in line with Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools published by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

2.5.

Options for securing future delivery of an in-school counselling service, as detailed in section 5 of this report, with the preferred option being to provide an in-house service, comprising full-time permanent posts of school counsellor, together with part-time support staff.

It is recommended:

2.6.

That an in-school counselling service be established as part of the education service's pupil support team.

2.7.

That the following permanent posts be established in order to provide the in-school counselling service:

- 3 full time equivalent (FTE) posts of In-school Counsellor, G8.
- 1.2 FTE posts of Support for Learning staff, G3.

3. Background

3.1.

In March 2020, the Scottish Government published guidance for education authorities on counselling in schools. Supported by specific funding, the aim was to establish a universal service for all children and young people aged 10 and over.

3.2.

Counselling is one of a range of services that helps to support the health, emotional and social needs of young people and can help a healthy school culture. It is not intended to replace the support provided by teachers and other professionals in educational settings to promote the wellbeing of young people. It should therefore be seen as part of a whole school approach to supporting wellbeing.

3.3.

The expectation is that formal counselling should be undertaken by a professional counsellor, acting in their specialist role, and in accordance with a strict code of ethics, which requires confidentiality, accountability and clinical supervision. There may be times, however, when maintaining and extending the support from a key adult is a more appropriate alternative to a child starting counselling. This can be identified through individual conversations with the child and/or parent/carer to inform the most appropriate form of ongoing future support.

3.4.

There is also an expectation that the counselling service is not restricted to term times, which means approaches to delivery in holiday periods needs to be considered. This can include 'virtual' delivery but will also include use of other community meeting spaces, should the school not be open or available for any reason.

4. An In-school Counselling Service for Orkney

4.1.

Within an Orkney context, it is essential that, alongside face to face counselling, there is provision for the service to be delivered by video communication. Providing counselling on this basis presents additional challenges and this is recognised and embedded within the proposal. It is expected that within the Orkney service, counsellors will have undertaken additional training in order to support this approach. In managing remote delivery to schools, the presence of a support worker, to be on

hand should they be required, is considered to be integral to delivery of safe and ethical practice.

4.2.

A part-time in-school counselling service has been available within Orkney's senior secondary schools for some time. The service was originally established in line with Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools – Scotland, published by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. At the time, Susan McGinnis (co-author of the practice guide) worked with a number of organisations in Orkney to ensure effective and safe delivery of the service.

4.3.

While the original service has been extended, as and when possible through additional funding and its operational parameters have changed over time, the core principles underpinning delivery have been consistently applied and maintained.

4.4.

The service currently provides a service to approximately 70 young people across P7-S6. While the majority of referrals come from the schools (guidance or other staff members), a significant number are either self-referrals or referrals from other agencies/professionals. It is positively evaluated by users and staff within schools hold the service in high regard.

5. Options for Delivery of an In-school Counselling Service

5.1.

Two specific options for securing future delivery of the service are available:

- Procurement of the service from one or more external providers.
- Establishment of the role of school counsellor as part of the education service establishment.

5.2.

In considering both options, the learning from the experience of the current service has been taken into account. It is recognised that the service needs to be both integral to the school, but also independent from it. In this way practice can be safe, but the users of the service understand it is both independent and confidential. However, it also should be recognised that the local authority retains responsibility for clients, should the service fail.

5.3.

On balance establishing the role as part of the education service establishment facilitates the most efficient approach to balancing and managing the risk. The service would, in terms of being ethically independent, while simultaneously integral to the Council, be similar to the current Educational Psychology Service, for example. Incidentally, this approach also allows for a greater investment in frontline service as it avoids the requirement for contract management.

6. The Cost of an In-school Counselling Service

6.1.

It is proposed that the service be based on the provision of 3.0 full time equivalent (FTE) suitably qualified and experienced counsellors.

6.2.

The proposed job description and person specification is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Job evaluation places the in-school counsellor role at G8 on the Council's pay scale. With oncosts, a G8 post requires a budget of £38,800 (G8 £38,800 - £42,900 including on costs and Distant Islands Allowance (DIA)).

6.2.1.

In addition, an amount needs to be set aside for travel, subsistence, supplies and services. This has been set at £3,000 for each post. This brings the total allocation for each post to £41,800.

6.3.

In addition, there needs to be a support worker allocation made to each of the island schools where a video linked service will need to be integrated into the provision of counselling. This has been calculated on the basis of 0.4 FTE for the junior high schools (Sanday, Stronsay and Westray). To achieve this, a total support allocation of 1.2 FTE is required. The support post is based on a G3 (support for learning assistant) grade. With oncosts, a G3 post requires a budget of £24,300 (G3 £24,300 – £25,700 including on costs and DIA).

6.4.

The total, full year, cost of the service is calculated to be £154,560.

6.5.

The value of the Scottish Government funding for in-school counselling is £166,000.

6.6.

The remainder of the budget, £11,440, will be set aside for the provision of professional supervision for the in-school counsellors and for making small temporary adjustments to the staffing establishment of other island schools, to support users of the service, when needed. Given that this is a new service, a specific review of costs and budget, in addition to routine budget monitoring, will be undertaken each month.

7. Human Resource Implications

If approved, the In-school Counselling Service will add 4.2 FTE to the establishment, as detailed in section 6 above. Recruitment to these posts will be in accordance to the Council's recruitment and retention policy.

8. Equalities Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

9. Links to Council Plan

9.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Caring Communities.

9.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority 2.1 We will support the mental wellbeing of our children and young people by co-producing preventative approaches in consultation with young people as well as supporting early intervention and recovery/restorative services.

10. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Living Well.

11. Financial Implications

11.1.

The Scottish Government has made £166,000 (current financial year) available for the provision of counselling services in schools.

11.2.

The estimated cost of running the service as described in section 6 is £155,000. An additional sum for professional supervision needs to be set aside, bringing the total cost to or near to the budget of £166,000.

12. Legal Aspects

As school counselling has not been incorporated within any statutory duties, there is no legal requirement to provide it. The requirement for the school counselling service arises as a result of a joint agreement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). Therefore, the guidance which is provided is non-statutory.

13. Contact Officers

James Wylie, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2477, Email james.wylie@orkney.gov.uk.

Peter Diamond, Head of Education, extension 2436, Email peter.diamond@orkney.gov.uk.

14. Appendices

Appendix 1: In-school Counsellor (Job description and person specification).

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.



1. Service	Education, Leisure and Housing
2. Area	Education
3. Job Title	In-school Counsellor
4. Location	School Place
5. Reporting To	Service Manager (Support for Learning and Inclusion)
6. Grade	G8
7. Job Evaluation Reference	A5128
8. Competency Band	B1

9. Job Purpose

Delivery of an in-school counselling service and wellbeing support (including Play Therapy) to children and young people aged 10 and over (including, where agreed, those who are home educated) to ensure and enhance emotional health and wellbeing.

10. Job Specific Duties and Responsibilities

Deliver face to face student in-school counselling on either a 1 to 1 or group-based approach (including, for example Play Therapy).

Maintain, in line with all professional and ethical standards, autonomous responsibility for the assessment, formulation, treatment and discharge of caseload.

Support development of other formats of in-school counselling provision i.e. online/telephone as appropriate.

Develop and maintain relevant external counselling provision/wider support links to enable onward referral of cases as appropriate.

Ensure all case records are maintained confidentially and securely in line with legal/professional requirements and relevant Orkney Islands Council policies and procedures.

Deliver general (age appropriate) wellbeing information sessions for children and young people in relation to counselling, mental health and wellbeing.

Ensure availability of information resources for children and young people in respect of counselling, mental health and wellbeing in both hard copy and digital formats and online.

Provision of advice, guidance and information on counselling provision to children, young people, parents/carers, staff and other professionals.

Represent the In-school Counselling Service on relevant working groups, as agreed with Line Manager.

11. General Duties and Responsibilities

Working Environment

The post holder will be predominantly based indoors, however the role may require them to travel between different locations on occasion.

Communication

The post holder will have regular communication of a confidential/personal/sensitive nature with students. The post holder will also regularly communicate with work colleagues across the Council as well as other relevant external bodies and organisations i.e. external counselling/support services.

Responsibility for Employees

The post holder has no responsibility for employees.

Financial Resources

The post holder has no responsibility for financial resources.

Information Systems

The post holder will make regular use of routine computer/information systems including email, Internet and Microsoft Office programmes. The post holder will have access to and responsibility for the security of personal information relating to children and young people's health and wellbeing.

12. Corporate Responsibilities

As an employee of Orkney Islands Council; the postholder is required to:-

Observe the Council's policies regarding the data protection and confidentiality of information.

Observe the Council's Health and Safety and Risk Management policies

Be aware and adhere to the Council's policy on Equal opportunities and Diversity.

Undertake any training as necessary to carry out the duties of the post.

Participate in the Employee Review and Development Scheme as appropriate.

Undertake any other work as required up to and commensurate with the grade for the post.

The post holder may be called upon to support the response required to an emergency in line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

13. Criminal Records Checks - please select the relevant option(s)

- This post does not require a check on criminal conviction history
- Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2015 you are required to disclose all criminal convictions from the 'offences which must always be disclosed' list and non-spent convictions from the 'offences which are to be disclosed subject to rules' list.
- This post requires a satisfactory Basic Police Act Disclosure check.
- This post requires a satisfactory Standard Police Act Disclosure check.
- This post requires a satisfactory Enhanced Police Act Disclosure check.
- This post requires PVG Scheme membership in respect of regulated work with Children.
- This post requires PVG Scheme membership in respect of regulated work with Adults.

14. Significant/Regular demands associated with the Role

Task	Relevant (please tick) ✓	Task	Relevant (please tick) ✓
Driving (Car/Van)		Exposure to Excessive noise	
Driving (HGV/PCV)		Use of vibrating tools	
Display screen use	✓	Contact with skin irritants	
Food handling		Contact with lung irritants	
Lone working		Work involving strenuous effort	
Shift working		Working at height	
Night working		Working in static and/or awkward positions	
Working with people requiring physical assistance		Working in confined spaces	
Working with people with challenging behaviour		Sea going post	
Working with vulnerable adults		Wearing breathing apparatus	
Working with children	✓	Working near traffic	
Administration of prescribed medication		Other (please specify)	

15. Politically Restricted PostYes No

This post is classed as a politically restricted post under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

16. Contractually Required Professional Registration

Holding, maintaining and evidencing as requested registration with the identified professional body/organisation is a contractual requirement of working in this post. The specific level of registration required to be held is specified in the Person Specification under Qualification/Attainments.

- General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
- Scottish Social Services Council* (SSSC) * or other relevant professional accepted by the SSSC.
- The Law Society of Scotland
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Other: Professional Registration as approved by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) e.g. BACP, PTUK, BAPT, COSCA

17. Unsocial and Other working arrangements relevant to this post

The working pattern for this post requires that contractually you are required:

- To work on a rota that requires regular 5 day over 7 working including weekends for which you will be paid 10% Unsocial Hours Allowance;
- To work on a rota that requires regular 5 day over 7 working including weekend and nights for which you will be paid 15% Unsocial Hours Allowance;
- To work all contracted hour at weekends, for which you will be paid a 25% Unsocial Hours Allowance;
- To work all contacted hours during the night, for which you will be paid a 33% Unsocial Hours Allowance;
- To participate in a rota of Sleep In cover at your place of work, for which you can claim sleep over allowance;
- To participate in a standby duty rota, for which you can claim standby allowance.
- To work additional hours depending on the exigencies of the services.

18. Agreement of Job Description (digital electronic signatures only)

Manager: _____

Human Resources: _____

19. Employee Acceptance of Job Description

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Service: Education, Leisure and Housing		Area: Education	
Post Title: In-School Counsellor			
Factor	Criteria	Essential or Desirable	How Assessed
Knowledge and Experience	2 years post qualifying experience of delivery of face to face and/or group counselling.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
	Previous experience of effective management of a case load and associated records.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
	Previous experience of effectively dealing with personal/sensitive/confidential information.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
	Previous experience of partnership working.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
	Ability to evidence up to date knowledge of current developments and best practice in relation to student counselling/wellbeing.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
	Ability to demonstrate strong IT literacy skills including use of online resources and MS office packages.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
	Ability to demonstrate a history of relevant continuing professional development.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
	Previous experience of providing on-line counselling.	Desirable	Application Form and/or Interview
	Previous experience of providing counselling support and advice within an educational establishment.	Desirable	Application Form and/or Interview
	Experienced in the use of appropriate assessment tools eg YP CORE, SDQ's.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
Qualifications/ Attainments	Hold a Practitioner qualification (minimum SCQF8) in Counselling.	Essential	Screening Question and Application Form
	Hold Full Registration on an appropriate Register, approved	Essential	Screening Question and Application Form

	by the PSA e.g. BACP, PTUK, COSCA, BAPT. Qualified to deliver on-line counselling.	Essential	Application Form and/or Interview
Other Requirements	Ability to travel efficiently and effectively between various work locations within Orkney to meet the operational requirements of the Service.	Essential	Screening question

Core Competencies – These are the target behaviours the post holder should display
(Competencies are Essential criteria and are assessed as part of the interview process)

Being Customer/client focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the importance of quality customer/client services within the team and aims to exceed customer/client expectations. • Identifies opportunities to improve the way the team delivers customer/client services. • Ensures teams correctly identify customer/client needs and provide satisfactory solutions. • Takes personal responsibility to manage customer/client relationships. • Implements service improvements. • Monitors quality of service.
Working effectively with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats team members fairly and equally, recognises and demonstrates appreciation of their contribution. • Identifies with and has a shared commitment to achieving team objectives. • Shares knowledge and information with others. • Thanks others for their contribution and efforts. • Fosters good working relationships with teams in own service. • Actively seeks others input and values their contribution.
Managing Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts positively to change. • Is flexible and adapts plans in response to change. • Prepares and supports team members during periods of change. • Constructively challenges current thinking and procedures and offers alternative solutions. • Gains acceptance of necessary changes by communicating their benefits with conviction and enthusiasm.
Taking ownership and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes the initiative to start activities or actions. • Recognises when a decision is needed and commits to act. • Is proactive, acts quickly to address current issues. • Seeks feedback and takes appropriate action. • Takes responsibility for personal development. • Modifies own behaviour to influence different situations.
Communicating effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses positive appropriate language in all situations. • Communicates clearly and concisely to influence others. • Uses a variety of methods to communicate in the most effective manner. • Creates a positive confident impression. • Uses interpersonal skills to have a positive impact in meetings. • Keeps written messages simple.
Planning and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly monitors progress and takes corrective action to ensure priorities are met. • Gathers information from several readily available sources. • Considers information objectively to establish logical options and generate solutions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers options and risks before making decisions. • Determines resources and co-ordinates work logically to ensure tasks are completed effectively.
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critically reflects own leadership skills and abilities, and takes responsibility for using and developing these • seeks feedback and evidence to continually enhance own leadership capability. • resilient and focuses on outcomes. • works collaboratively towards a shared purpose and to inspire change • values and respects the contributions of service users and colleagues • shares information and promotes effective knowledge management



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	In-school Counselling Service
Service / service area responsible.	Education
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Peter Diamond
Date of assessment.	16-08-21
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	New service

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	Establish a universal counselling service for all children and young people aged 10 and over.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	Yes – it would be expected that the service adds capacity to the overall offer to support well-being of young people and mental health in particular.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Key impact will be on young people, with secondary impact on those they live with and/or who care for them.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this	Stakeholders have not been consulted directly, however there is a consistent narrative arising from consultative activity with young people about the

function / policy / plan?	need to improve service to support mental health in Orkney.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).	National guidance on the establishment of the service is available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-education-authorities-establishing-access-counselling-secondary-schools/
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	In general terms there a well-documented research that demonstrates the link between educational outcomes and socio-economic advantage. Given that it is expected that the service will have a positive impact on educational outcomes, it should be expected that there will be a related impact on socio-economic advantage (and reduction in socio-economic disadvantage). Exemplar literature can be found: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jcad.12221
Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?	(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No differential impact anticipated.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No differential impact anticipated.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	Counselling services can provide significant support for young people when sexual orientation is an issue impacting on their life.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	Counselling services can provide significant support for young people when transitioning is an issue impacting on their life.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No differential impact anticipated.

6. Age: people of different ages.	This is a service specifically designed to support young people and it is anticipated that there will be benefits to well-being and mental health.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No differential impact anticipated.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No differential impact anticipated.
9. Care experienced.	Counselling services can provide significant support for young people who are care experienced.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No differential impact anticipated.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	No differential impact anticipated.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	No differential impact anticipated.
13. Isles-proofing.	Additional resources are proposed to ensure continuous and equitable delivery of service across the outer isles.

3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	No
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	N/A
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	No
What action is to be taken?	N/A
Who will undertake it?	N/A
When will it be done?	N/A
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	N/A

Signature:		Date:	16-08-21
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Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk