

Item: 16

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 15 November 2023.

Support for Learning Strategy.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider a draft Support for Learning Strategy.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the existing level of support provided to children and young people with Additional Support Needs leaves a level of unmet need across schools and nurseries

2.2.

That a Support for Learning Strategy, which sets out a clear approach to mitigating the level of unmet need, has been drafted.

2.3.

That the aims and ambition of the draft Support for Learning Strategy cannot be implemented in full without additional resources

It is recommended:

2.4.

That the Support for Learning Strategy 2023-2028, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

3. Introduction

3.1.

Supporting Children's Learning: Statutory Guidance on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended), notes that the term additional support needs is both broad and inclusive. It applies to children or young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support.

3.2.

The statutory guidance notes that there are a wide range of factors which may lead to some children and young people having a need for additional support. However, these fall broadly into four overlapping themes:

- Learning environment.
- Family circumstances.
- Disability or health need.
- Social and emotional factors.

3.3.

The guidance further notes that the definition of additional support is also wide and inclusive it does fall into three broad and overlapping headings:

- Approaches to learning and teaching.
- Support from personnel.
- Provision of resources.

3.4.

In preparing the strategy, having looked in detail at the current trends in additional support needs, there has been a particular focus on:

- Auditing the current resource (which includes support from people).
- Identifying the current unmet need across schools and nurseries.

3.5.

The emergent Support for Learning Strategy 2023-2028, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, involves the following key elements:

- Improving efficiency and effectiveness.
- Developing confidence and capability.
- Ensuring sufficiency and capacity.

4. Improving efficiency and effectiveness

4.1.

The Strategy notes that while a portion of the current deployable resource is centrally based, the largest part is allocated to specific schools, either on a permanent or temporary basis. This means that the whole system is not as efficient, and consequently not as effective, as it could be. Where new or emergent significant need is identified, it takes a long time to move the necessary staffing from one setting to another.

4.2.

The principal recommendations are:

- To manage Support for Learning Assistants provision centrally.
- To consolidate roles within the Pupil Support Team in recognition of the changing priorities and increasing needs of children and young people.
- To utilise the same request for advice procedure and paperwork for all Education based support resources.

4.3.

The Strategy also notes that efficiency and effectiveness is also about working with and across partner services and organisations to support both preventative measures and interventions at the earliest opportunity. Consequently, the education, support for learning strategy, is set within the wider context of the plans and aspirations of the wider children's service plan.

4.4.

While there are implications in relation to contracts and contractual obligations, there are no specific financial implications arising from this strand of the strategy, other than it is predicated on current funding levels being maintained.

5. Developing confidence and capability

5.1.

The Strategy notes that successes, in terms of meeting the needs of children and young people, would almost always appear to have a common theme – the staff involved are confident about the approaches they are taking and, based on knowledge, skills and experience, can adapt, in an agile and responsive way, to the presenting needs of those they support.

5.2.

The principal recommendations are:

- To develop and evolve the Support for Learning network.
- To explore further the role of Educational Psychology in increasing capacity through delivering and sourcing training.
- To introduce a bespoke learning pathway for Support for Learning Assistants.
- To provide support (mentoring and guidance) for Support for Learning Teachers wishing to undertake relevant post graduate learning.
- To continue to support the current Guidance Network.

5.3.

Again, there are no specific financial implications arising from this strand of the Strategy, other than it is predicated on current funding levels being maintained.

6. Ensuring sufficiency and capacity

6.1.

The strategy notes that while efficiency, effectiveness, confidence and capability are all essential aspects of meeting learners needs, it is also important that the resource available is in line with the needs identified.

6.2.

The apparent widening gap between identified need and resources available is outlined in the annexes to the Strategy. Various options and choices for ensuring sufficiency and capacity are set out below. Each has a very specific financial implication.

6.3.

The proposed possibilities are:

- Increase the allocation of Support for Learning Assistants at a cost of £393,113.
- Increase the Pupil Support Team a cost of £165,800.
- Make permanent the existing temporary guidance posts, at a cost of £149,834.
- Increase Educational Psychology provision at a cost of £92,300.
- Increase provision of Youth Workers in school at a cost of £332,700.
- Establish a specific budget to help with the provision of Additional Support Needs related equipment and to fund the training pathways at a cost of £50,000.
- Recruit third In-School Counsellor to cater for Junior High Schools and Primary Schools (within budget).

6.4.

The ability to progress this strand of the strategy would be dependent on:

- Redirecting/reallocating existing resources within education, leisure, and housing, or
- Capitalising on additional grant funding for the Scottish Government, or
- Increasing the resources aligned to the service during the Council's budget setting process.

7. Human Resources Implications

There are no direct Human Resources implications within this report of the attached Strategy. The proposed increases in resource (therefore staffing) mentioned in both this report and the attached Strategy exist to illustrate what would be required to reduce the level of unmet need. Any future change in establishment will require to follow normal Council governance approval procedures.

8. Equalities Impact

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

9. Island Communities Impact

As the strategy being developed in terms of this report has been assessed as being unlikely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities) in Orkney, a full Island Communities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

10. Links to Council Plan

10.1.

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

10.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority C4, Improve Education Standards (Scottish Attainment Challenge) of the Council Delivery Plan.

11. 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 Local Equality.

12. Financial Implications

12.1.

At present there is no additional funding available to support an increase in staffing or any other associated costs. Therefore, the delivery actions from this Strategy must be met within budgeted, or funded, resources.

12.2.

Any proposal to increase staffing or other costs would need to be fully costed and funding approved before implementation of additional services .

13. Legal Aspects

13.1.

Under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, education authorities must provide adequate and efficient school education for children of school age within their area.

13.2.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 requires that pupils with additional support needs learn in a mainstream school unless specific exemptions apply.

13.3.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended 2009) created the term 'additional support needs' and places duties on local authorities to identify, meet and keep under review the needs of pupils for whom they are responsible.

13.4.

The Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) provides parents and pupils with the right to make a tribunal claim in respect of disability discrimination relating to local authorities' additional support plan decisions.

14. Contact Officers

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15. Appendices

Appendix 1: Support for Learning Strategy.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.



**Orkney Islands Council
Education Leisure and Housing**

**Support for Learning
Strategy**

2023 - 2028

Version Control

Document Reference.	Revision.	Issue Date.	Reason for Issue.	Reviewer.	Sign.
ES/SFLS	00.	Date	New Policy.	Service Manager Support for Learning and Inclusion	

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Part 1 Introduction

1.1.

Supporting Children’s Learning: Statutory Guidance on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended), notes (page 11) that the term additional support needs is both broad and inclusive. It ‘applies to children or young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support’.

1.2.

The guidance further notes that the definition of additional support is wide and inclusive (page 20); it does however fall into three broad and overlapping headings: approaches to learning and teaching, support from personnel, and provision of resources.

1.3.

In preparing the strategy there has been a particular focus on

- Auditing the current resource (which includes support from people) and
- Identifying the current unmet need across schools and nurseries.

1.4.

The emergent five-year strategy for Support for Learning across Orkney involves the following key elements:

- Improving efficiency and effectiveness.
- Developing confidence and capability.
- Ensuring sufficiency and capacity.

1.5.

This strategy makes reference to the ‘Additional Support for Learning Action Plan’, produced by the Scottish Government and updated in October 2020. The purpose of these references is to provide clear links between our own priorities and strategies and the national context.

1.6.

Underpinning all that follows is the desire to “ensure that there is no reduction in aspiration and ambition for all children and young people to achieve the maximum of their learning potential” (Additional Support for Learning Action Plan, 2020)

1.7.

While this document applies specifically to Support for Learning and the full spectrum of additional support needs, it also links to other developments and strategies within Education. For example, the current focus, within Orkney’s National Improvement Framework (NIF) Plan, on the principles of teaching, learning and assessment, includes an emphasis on inclusion. Improving inclusive practice and the standard of teaching and learning benefits all, including those with additional support needs.

1.8.

Clear links have also been made with the Education Service's Raising Attainment Strategy 2023 - 2026. The Support for Learning Strategy seeks to provide the structure which will contribute to an increase in enabling all pupils to access the right support for their needs, which will clearly have a positive impact on attainment across the authority.

1.9.

There is also a deliberate emphasis within this strategy on promoting positive mental health within our schools and nurseries. At the time of writing, we are seeing a significant increase in concerns about the mental health and subsequent wellbeing of our children and young people in Orkney. Tragically the Orkney community has experienced three completed suicides of school age young people over an 18-month period.

1.10.

Schools have worked hard to provide support alongside partners for a growing number of young people expressing suicidal ideation. This creates acute pressure on staff, who are working tirelessly to monitor the wellbeing of our young people and communicate with parents and carers, partners and colleagues.

1.11.

It should also be noted that the intention is for the Support for Learning Strategy to be amended and updated following the currently scheduled review of both the Resource School Provision, at Glaitness School and Kirkwall Grammar School, as well as the current Guidance Provision across the whole of the secondary sector.

1.12.

Part 1 of the strategy offers a broad introduction. Part 2 then explores current trend, patterns and pressures, in relation to additional support needs. Part 3 describes the current resources being deployed across Orkneys schools and settings.

1.13.

Parts 4,5 and 6 expand on each of the strategy's themes: Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness; Developing Confidence and Capability; Ensuring Sufficiency and Capacity.

1.14.

Finally, Part 7 provides a summary overview by drawing together the actions, cost and impacts set out in each section of the strategy.

Part 2 Trends in Additional Support Needs

2.1.

There is a wide range of factors which may lead to some children and young people having a need for additional support. These fall broadly into four overlapping themes:

- Learning environment.
- Family circumstances.
- Disability or health need.
- Social and emotional factors.

2.2.

Over the last six years, across Scotland, the number of children with additional support needs has been steadily increasing. Between 2017 and 2022, the number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs in Scotland increased from 27% to 34%.

2.3.

In the same period, in Orkney, the number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs increased from 31% to 40%. By way of comparison Annex 1, attached to this report, compares the national picture with Orkney, Shetland, the Western Isles and Highland.

2.4.

In Orkney, across many of the categories of additional support needs, numbers have remained relatively constant. In some categories, while numbers have gone up, the percentage change is 'modest'. An example of this is the specific learning difficulties category.

2.5.

As can be seen in Annex 2, the increase in the specific learning difficulties category sits at around 6% over the 4-year period. However, the definition for specific learning difficulty is quite narrow – it refers to processing difficulties, but dyslexia, which could be included, is captured separately. Examples within this category would be dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

2.6.

In contrast, there has been quite a significant increase with respect to social, emotion and behavioural difficulties as well Autistic Spectrum Continuum which have both seen increases of over 37%.

2.7.

As described in the same chart, the number of children and young people experiencing social and emotional difficulties has increased markedly.

2.8.

This includes those on flexible learning pathways (not attending school full-time) and those that do not attend at all. This number has increased from 27 to 45 since 2019. Significant support is required to engage these children and young people in full time education.

2.9.

From 2017 to 2022, the number of children and young people who have a support team that includes colleagues from other services has increased from 309 children or young people with identified additional support needs to 654. While this is a positive picture in terms of partnership working, this level of involvement is also a good proxy for how complex the needs are, compared to six years previously.

2.10.

This quantitative data supports the feedback from school and nursery leaders, who provide a qualitative narrative on what this means in practice. For example, it will mean that more time is required to manage and plan the process, including the need for support for learning assistants to attend and participate in planning and review meetings, which in turn reduces availability for contact time and adds to the pressure in the system.

Part 3 Current Resource

3.1 Context

3.1.1.

The current resource to meet the additional support needs of children and young people in schools falls into two broad categories.

3.1.2.

In the first instance there is an expectation that the approaches to learning and teaching deployed by every teacher (schools) and practitioner (early learning and childcare settings), will meet the needs of most learners most of the time. As noted in the introductory comments, there is a focus on quality learning, teaching and assessment within the current education service plan and this includes the commitment to inclusive practice.

3.1.3.

In addition, further resources are deployed in order to support inclusive practice and help to ensure all children and young people benefit from their time at nursery or school. These additional resources can be described as follows:

- Support for Learning Teachers in schools.
- Support for Learning Assistants.
- Pupil Support Team.
- Educational Psychology.
- Guidance Teachers.
- 100 Days posts (5 FTE Teachers and 2 Support for Learning Assistants).
- In-School Counselling.

3.2. Support for Learning Teachers in Schools

3.2.1.

Each school is allocated additional support for learning teaching time based on the school roll and type. The allocation varies from 0 (for very small schools) to a maximum of 0.5 per class (mid-sized and larger primary schools). In secondary schools the allocation is fixed and based on the general characteristics of the school.

3.2.2.

The annual staffing cost for Support for Learning Teachers is £1,700,497.

3.2.3.

The Support for Learning Teacher fills a variety of roles within each school including:

- Supporting individual children or young people.
- Supporting small groups.
- Working in class.

- Advising staff and providing resources.
- Organising and tracking support meetings.
- Managing the timetables of Support for Learning Assistants.

3.2.4.

There are currently 25 FTE Support for Learning Teachers across 21 schools.

3.3. Support for Learning Assistants

3.3.1.

Support for Learning Assistants are currently allocated annually based on the need that exists in each setting. Schools fill out a request, and this request is then moderated with the Head Teacher by the Service Manager (Support for Learning and Inclusion), Educational Psychologists and the Principal Teacher for Pupil Support.

3.3.2.

The Support for Learning Assistant allocation to each school is described in the number of hours allocated per week. The current allocation totals 2,368 hours per week.

3.3.3.

This increased from 1,771.8 hours in 2022 and was achieved by combining existing baseline budget with additional COVID-19 Recovery Funding and 100 Day Funding provided by the Scottish Government. As an indication of the coverage the Support for Learning Assistant allocation would give full time support to 67 pupils.

3.3.4.

Of the current resource, 42 children and young people receive full time support, with the remaining hours distributed to pupils who require less than full time support. The support provided includes in class support and bespoke provision outside the classroom. A child receiving full time support from a Support for Learning Assistant has an allocation of 35 hours per week.

3.3.5.

Some children and young people with profound needs may require support from more than one adult, so the allocation might exceed this number. Other children may receive one or two hours per week for specific tasks they find difficult.

3.4. Pupil Support Team

3.4.1.

The Pupil Support Team is based in Papdale House and provides support to all schools and nurseries. It operates on a referral basis with schools putting in requests for advice.

3.4.2.

The baseline staffing budget for 2023/24 for the Pupil Support Team is £525,400.

3.4.3.

The Pupil Support Team consists of 7 teachers, including a Principal Teacher who leads the team, and two Youth Support Workers. The teachers specialise in:

- Hearing support (supporting 29 pupils).
- Visual support (supporting 14 pupils).
- Neuro-diversity (Autism, ADHD. Supporting 68 pupils).
- Communication and EAL (English as an additional Language). (Supporting 20 pupils).

3.4.4.

The Youth Support Workers and one of the teachers form the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) Team. This team focuses on engaging children and young people who demonstrate challenging behaviours, have experienced childhood trauma and those that find attending school difficult. Currently 21 pupils are receiving input from the SEAL team.

3.4.5.

The Pupil Support Team operates a managed caseload approach, and they are currently oversubscribed. There is a waiting list which is most acute in relation to neurodiversity and social and emotional needs. There are currently 29 pupils on the waiting list.

3.5. Educational Psychology

3.5.1.

The Education Service currently has 1.8 FTE allocated for Educational Psychology. This team consists of one full time Principal Educational Psychologist and a second 0.8 FTE Educational Psychologist.

3.5.2.

The baseline staffing budget for 2023/24 of the Educational Psychology team is £174,100.

3.5.3.

Each Psychologist is allocated schools and nurseries to support. This means that each Psychologist has approximately 1,400 children and young people allocated to them. Not all children and young people will require input from Educational Psychology, but data shows that 40% of pupils in Orkney are classed as having Additional Support Needs.

3.5.4.

Schools refer children and young people to Educational Psychology who play a vital role in advising strategies, sourcing support, training staff, consulting school leaders and co-ordinating support meetings. There are currently 441 children and young people who have direct Educational Psychology involvement.

3.5.5.

Educational Psychology also plays a vital strategic role in informing policies and processes around Additional Support Needs.

3.6. Guidance Teachers

3.6.1.

Guidance teachers play a vital role in the Secondary and Junior High School settings. These professionals have oversight of the wellbeing, safeguarding and child protection of the young people they work with. In the larger schools, guidance staff are allocated a number of children and young people to work with.

3.6.2.

The baseline staffing budget for 2023/24 the permanent guidance staff is £491,600 which covers 6.6 FTE staff. In addition, 2.0 FTE temporary positions are being funded through the 100 Days fund and the (school-based) Pupil Equity Fund.

Each of the Junior High Schools has a 0.2 allocation, provided to support (and funded through) the In-school Counselling service.

3.6.3.

Guidance teachers are the point of contact for children and young people who are having difficulty coping with the social and emotional requirements of school, are experiencing social conflicts or bullying, have concerns about their safety or have immediate child protection concerns. They also lead on and deliver the Personal and Social Education curriculum. This is a vital and taxing role as all interactions with the pupils needs to be planned for, recorded and then acted on. They have to escalate concerns in a timely manner and work with partners from Social Work, Police Scotland and the NHS.

3.7. 100 Days posts

3.7.1.

The 100 Days funded posts refer teaching and support positions that have been funded through the 100 Days allocation by the Scottish Government.

3.7.2.

First received in 2021, this fund was given to employ 5 FTE classroom teachers and 2 FTE Support for Learning Assistants.

3.7.3.

The current 100 Days provision is £296,300.

3.7.4.

This funding is currently being used to provide support to the most critical needs across the schools. This provision means that children and young people who could not otherwise attend school are able to have bespoke provision.

3.8. In-School Counselling

3.8.1.

While In-school Counselling has been available for a number of years, the education service has now established an in-house, In-School Counselling team. These counsellors are based in Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy.

3.8.2.

The baseline staffing budget for 2023/24 of the In-School counselling service is £166,000.

3.8.3.

The counsellors provide support for pupils' wellbeing, particularly in regard to mental health. The service is currently oversubscribed. The counsellors report back to the service on a termly basis and have described a significant number of young people within the schools experiencing poor mental health. Currently there are 50 pupils receiving counselling, with a further 15 waiting. This service currently only covers Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy.

3.8.4.

There are two counsellors currently, and attempts have been made to recruit a third. It is anticipated that the new provision of training at UHI Orkney will, in time, result in an increase in the available workforce and that the service can be grown. The aim is for the service, in line with national guidance, to be available to all secondary school pupils (which it is) and to primary school pupils, with additional support needs, aged 10 and over (which it is not).

Summary of Current Resources and Costs

Current Provision	Current Spend
1. Support for Learning Teachers in schools	£1,700,497.00
2. Support for Learning Assistants	£1,395,600.00
3. Pupil Support Team	£525,400.00
4. Educational Psychology	£174,100.00
5. Guidance Teachers	£491,600.00
6. 100 Days posts	£296,300.00
7. In-School Counselling	£166,000.00
Total Cost per annum	£4,749,497.00

Part 4 Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness:

4.1.

While a portion of the current deployable resource is centrally based, the largest part is allocated to specific schools, either on a permanent or temporary basis. This means that the whole system is not as efficient, and consequently not as effective, as it could be. Where new or emergent significant need is identified, it takes a long time to move the necessary staffing from one setting to another. Within the existing resource envelope, the most practical solution is to centralise the resource, and for this team to be on permanent contracts.

4.2.

Efficiency and effectiveness is also about working with and across partner services and organisations to support both preventative measures and interventions at the earliest opportunity. Consequently, the education, support for learning strategy, is set within the wider context of the plans and aspirations of the wider children's service plan. This includes, but is not restricted to, the work being undertaken in relation to developing whole family support in collaboration with colleagues within Orkney Health and Care.

4.3.

While there are specific implications in relation to contracts and contractual obligations, there are no specific financial implications arising from this strand of the strategy, other than it is predicated on current funding levels being maintained.

4.4.

In recent years the support allocated to schools (Support for Learning Assistants (SfLA)) has been placed within each establishments staffing structure. This meant that each individual staff member was then associated with a school or nursery. As an unintended consequence, this has hindered our ability to be flexible and adaptable when it comes to allocating support. For instance, it is not unusual for a child or young person receiving support to change settings within Orkney during a school year. In the current system, it is very difficult to then ensure that the support follows the child as the staff member providing the support is allocated to the school.

4.5.

By centralising the management and oversight of our SfLA's and removing them from specific establishments, it would mean we could ensure support was dynamic, flexible and directed at the need of each child. Under this model, we could also look to decrease the high number of Support for Learning Assistants working under temporary contracts.

4.6.

Providing the right support for our children and young people is a task that falls to a number of groups of professionals within our education service. Alongside those already noted in Part 3 of this strategy, within Education, Leisure and Housing more broadly we also have colleagues in CLD (Community Learning and Development) who work directly with children, young people and their families and colleagues in Housing who oversee and run the Papdale Halls of Residence. We also now have the Pupil Engagement Team which consists of one full time co-ordinator and two youth support workers. This is funded by PEF (Pupil Equity Fund) from Papdale and KGS.

4.7.

Centralising the systems and procedures used to seek support and track progress is vital in order to co-ordinate the resources we have. Set out in the table below are the specific actions that would enable a cohesive approach to support in schools and nurseries across Orkney.

4.8.

Though not mentioned in the table below, it is worth noting that the centralisation and consolidation of our support resources would enable a smooth transition into our proposed Additional Support Needs Centre, proposed in the Learning Estates Strategy. We would have the core of a centralised team to deploy into that space as well as the internal structures and systems in order to co-ordinate and manage the support staff.

Summary of actions, costs and outcomes

Proposed Actions	Estimated costs
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Move all Support for Learning Assistants to be managed and funded centrally by the Service Manager for Support for Learning and Inclusion.2. Consolidate roles within the Pupil Support Team in order to match increasing needs. This would involve reallocating staff to cover neurodivergent needs as well as the growing social and emotional needs.3. Share the same request for advice procedure and paperwork for all Education based support resources.	No additional costs associated with these measures of outcomes
Outcomes	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enable dynamic and responsive support directed at the needs of our children and young people.2. Streamlined and simplified processes for schools to request support. As a result, support allocated more efficiently and in a targeted way.	

Part 5 Developing Confidence and Capability

5.1.

The most significant successes, in terms of meeting the needs of children and young people, would appear to have a common theme – the staff involved are confident about the approaches they are taking and, based on knowledge, skills and experience, can adapt, in an agile and responsive way, to the presenting needs of those they support.

5.2.

Along with securing staff on a permanent basis, ensuring the team are well trained and that this learning is regularly refreshed and updated is a key factor in nurturing success.

5.3.

Again, while there are specific implications in relation to contracts and contractual obligations, there are no specific financial implications arising from this strand of the strategy, other than it is predicated on current funding levels being maintained.

5.4.

Opportunities for teaching staff to undertake relevant post graduate learning exist across the higher education sector. As an integral part of this thread (confidence and capability) appropriate mentoring and guidance needs to be available to those who wish to pursue this.

5.5.

As a further measure to increase the capacity of Support for Learning Assistants, work is underway to design a bespoke training suite which utilises Orkney College to provide SVQ qualifications. Cost details from Orkney College are currently being awaited.

5.6.

The table below also makes reference to the Support for Learning and Guidance networks. These networks involve the establishment of regular professional learning opportunities and the chance for professionals in both areas to shape policy and procedure and share best practice. Both groups will meet once a month, with longer targeted sessions twice a year.

Summary of actions, costs and outcomes

Proposed Actions	Estimated costs
4. Develop and evolve the Support for Learning network to centralise communication and training for all SfL Teachers and Assistants. 5. Explore further the role of Educational Psychology in increasing capacity through delivering and sourcing training for core staff.	No additional costs associated with these measures of outcomes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Introduce bespoke learning pathway for Support for Learning Assistants 7. Provide support (mentoring and guidance) for Support for Learning Teachers wishing to undertake relevant post graduate learning. 8. Continue the current Guidance Network. 	
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Outcomes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. More efficient communication and training pitched at the needs of our children and young people. Greater ability to track trends and patterns in terms of support needs. 4. More efficient communication and training pitched at the needs of our children and young people. Greater ability to track trends and patterns in terms of mental health and safeguarding needs across Orkney. Continue to improve the collegiate working between all agencies who support children and young people.
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Part 6 Ensuring Sufficiency and Capacity

6.1. Context

6.1.1.

While efficiency, effectiveness, confidence and capability are all essential aspects of meeting learners needs, it is also important that the resource available is in line with the needs identified.

6.1.2.

The apparent widening gap between identified need and resources available is outlined in the various annexes to this strategy. Various options and choices for ensuring sufficiency and capacity are set out below. Each has a very specific financial implication. The ability to progress this strand of the strategy would be dependent on one or more (or a combination of) the following:

- Redirecting/reallocating existing resources within education, leisure, and housing, or
- Capitalising on additional grant funding for the Scottish Government, or
- Increasing the resources aligned to the service during the Council's budget setting process.

6.1.3.

The purpose of this analysis is primarily to provide data for future decision making and to ensure that, should funds from any source become available, the resource can be directed towards a strategic purpose.

6.2. Current Level of Unmet Need

“Professional development and learning processes must align with the changed and changing profile of children and young people in Scotland.” (Additional Support for Learning Action Plan, 2020).

6.2.1.

Attached to this strategy are three supporting appendices that describe the trends in additional support needs both nationally and here in Orkney. This information broadly describes an increase in the number of children and young people classified as having additional support needs, but also demonstrates the changes in underlying needs in our schools and nurseries.

6.2.2.

Here in Orkney, the number of children with additional support needs has increased from 31% to 40% from 2017 to 2022. In secondary schools, 50.5% of young people have additional support needs.

6.2.3.

An increase in the allocation of Support for Learning Assistants to keep pace with the increasing level of need as detailed in Appendix 1 would have a significant and immediate impact.

6.2.4.

In June 2022 we were able to increase the Support for Learning Assistant allocation to schools by 21%. While this is a significant increase, it comes after 3 years without an increase at all and 4 years since the number of Support for Learning Assistants was reduced to ensure budgets were met. Given what we know about the increase in need over that time, we are still looking at gaps in provision for children and young people.

6.2.5.

A further, increase of 490 hours (or 14 full time Support for Learning Assistants), per week, would enable the Education Service to provide support for all of those children and young people described as requiring support to engage in education.

6.2.6.

If the increase referred to at above was permanent, it would also enable the Education Service to reduce the number of short-term temporary contracts which not only make recruitment and retention very difficult but also have an administration cost associated with their management. The cost associated with the increase for the Support for Learning Assistants would be approximately £393,113 per annum.

6.3. Mental Health and Wellbeing

6.3.1.

With respect to support needs, the data indicates that the biggest growth areas are Dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Social and Emotional Behaviour Disorder.

6.3.2.

The latter describes a range of underlying causes that manifest themselves in difficulties coping in social situations such as schools and nurseries. Many of the children and young people who fit within this description either attend school on a part-time basis or not at all. The number of children who either don't attend or only attend part time has increased from 27 to 45 over the same period of time. This is out of a total pupil population of 2,796.

6.3.3.

Schools require specialist support to provide alternative provision for these children and young people. Currently we have a SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) team consisting of one part-time teacher and two youth support workers. They are constantly working at capacity and have a waiting list.

6.3.4.

Recently, the CLD Service collaborated with the Education Service to establish a Pupil Engagement Team, consisting of a Co-Ordinator and two support workers. While this increase is absolutely welcome and vital, the two support workers are funded through the Pupil Equity Fund through Papdale and Kirkwall Grammar School respectively. This means that they are limited to working with children, young people and families in these schools only, and the funding is only temporary.

6.3.5.

Related to the increase in Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties is the growing concern over the mental health of our children and young people. This growing need is difficult to quantify due to the confidential nature of the needs and the reliance on our partners, particularly CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and Social Work. One indication outlined in the appendices is the rapid increase in the number of our children and young people requiring multiple agencies to be co-ordinated for support. That number has increased from 309 in 2017 to 654 in 2022.

6.3.6.

As our valued colleagues in CAMHS and Social Work are stretched due to the increase in need for support, colleagues in schools are required to monitor, track and seek alternative support for a rapidly growing number of families and young people who are in crisis. Everyone in our community has been impacted by the tragic suicides of three school-age young people over the last 18 months, and Guidance staff and partners are regularly commenting on the increasing number of young people engaging in self-harm, discussing suicidal ideation and making attempts on their own lives.

6.3.7.

This impacts guidance staff and secondary leaders more than any other school staff, and they have worked tirelessly to keep our young people safe. We know that the waiting list for CAMHS engagement is increasing and we are also aware that this increasing need has not yet been accompanied by an increasing resource. This limits our ability to provide early intervention across the partnership, which would in turn reduce the number of children, young people and families in crisis in the longer term. Frontline staff across all partners, education included, are entirely occupied with addressing immediate concerns across our pupil population.

6.3.8.

A targeted increase in the Pupil Support Team aimed at the growing need would help schools and families seek alternative support. An increase of 2.0 FTE teachers and a 1.0 FTE Youth Support Worker would enable an increase in provision in relation to neurodiversity and SEAL support, the two biggest aspects of the service under pressure currently. The total cost of this increase would be approximately £165,800 per annum.

6.3.9.

At Kirkwall Grammar School, two of the guidance team are temporary. An option would be to make these posts permanent. In order to do so £149,834 per annum would need to be added to the staffing establishment budget of the school.

6.3.10.

Since April 2022, the number of children with Child's Plans to co-ordinate their support has increased by 14%. More anecdotally, school staff and Education Psychology have reported an increase in concerns over mental health in Children and Young People. We have seen an increase in reports of self-harm and suicidal ideation, particularly among secondary age pupils. In the current academic year the team has seen 16 reports of secondary age pupils self-harming or expressing suicidal ideation, a 40% increase on the previous year. This puts growing pressure on Guidance and support staff alike in the crucial area of Child Protection and Safeguarding.

6.3.11.

Adding an extra 1.0 FTE Educational Psychologist to the team would reduce current waiting lists as well as add flexibility to the current roles the Educational Psychology team fill. It would allow more strategic working such as staff training and classroom observations which would build capacity and create opportunities for early intervention. The total cost of this increase would be approximately £92,300 per annum.

6.3.12.

In addition, an increase of CLD provision for Youth Workers in School (unless project/needs led, the probable, ideal, working ratio would be 1 youth worker per 400 children/young people or a team of up to 10, centrally managed and working across all schools).

6.3.13.

Finally, in order to support and consolidate the overall aims and ambitions of this strategy, it would be helpful to establish a specific budget to help with the provision of Additional Support Needs related equipment and to fund the training pathways for support staff outlined earlier. At the present time both activities are funded through generic and sometimes devolved budgets, which have other priorities and pressures.

Summary of actions, Cost and Outcomes

In the table below is set out the key actions that would address the current gap in provision. Maintaining the current level of unmet need presents a risk to the Education Service and the Local Authority. The items are ranked in order of predicted impact.

Proposed Actions	Estimated costs
9. Increase the allocation of Support for Learning Assistants to keep pace with the increasing level of need.	£393,113.00
10. Increase the Pupil Support Team by two FTE Teachers and 1 FTE Youth Support Worker.	£165,800.00
11. Make permanent the existing temporary guidance posts	£149,834.00
12. Increase Educational Psychology by 1.0 FTE.	£92,300.00
13. Increase CLD provision of Youth Workers in school	£332,700.00
14. Establish a specific budget to help with the provision of Additional Support Needs related equipment and to fund the training pathways	£50,000.00
15. Recruit third In-School Counsellor to cater for Junior High Schools and Primary Schools*.	(Cost within budget)
Outcomes	
5. The impact of the proposed actions and investment above would address the immediate unmet need described in the section above, as well placing on a sound basis the commitment to prevention and early intervention.	

* Across the service there are a number of unfilled vacancies. This includes a vacancy for a third In-School Counsellor. This has been advertised a number of times. An exploration of how to fulfil the function (even on a temporary basis) by using alternative provision from outside agencies (this includes services not necessarily based in Orkney) is underway.

Part 7 Summary of Actions and Costs

7.1 Improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Proposed Actions	Estimated costs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move all Support for Learning Assistants to be managed and funded centrally by the Service Manager for Support for Learning and Inclusion. 2. Consolidate roles within the Pupil Support Team in order to match increasing needs. This would involve reallocating staff to cover neurodivergent needs as well as the growing social and emotional needs. 3. Share the same request for advice procedure and paperwork for all Education based support resources. 	No additional costs associated with these proposed actions

7.2 Developing confidence and capability.

Proposed Actions	Estimated costs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Develop and evolve the Support for Learning network to centralise communication and training for all SfL Teachers and Assistants. 5. Explore further the role of Educational Psychology in increasing capacity through delivering and sourcing training for core staff. 6. Introduce bespoke learning pathway for Support for Learning Assistants 7. Provide support (mentoring and guidance) for Support for Learning Teachers wishing to undertake relevant post graduate learning. 8. Continue the current Guidance Network. 	No additional costs associated with these proposed actions

7.3 Ensuring sufficiency and capacity.

Proposed Actions	Estimated costs
9. Increase in the allocation of Support for Learning Assistants to keep pace with the increasing level of need.	£393,113
10. Increase in capacity of the Pupil Support Team	£165,800
11. Make permanent the existing temporary guidance posts	149,834

12. Adding an extra 1.0 FTE Educational Psychologist to the team	£92,300
13. Increase the provision for Youth Workers in School	£332,700
14. Establish a specific budget to help with the provision of Additional Support Needs related equipment and to fund the training pathways	£50,000
15. Recruit third In-School Counsellor to cater for Junior High Schools and Primary Schools*.	(Cost within budget)

7.4 While change and impact of the individual actions will be recorded and evaluated, the overall impact of the provision will continue to be measured and monitored via the following mechanisms:

- BGE Tracking Toolkit.
- Nursery Tracking.
- Wellbeing Indicators.
- Attendance.
- Numbers of children and young people on part-time timetables.
- Secondary qualifications.
- Positive destinations.
- Personalised targets and milestones.
- Teacher/practitioner judgements.

“The investment in pupil support assistants should be in line with need and be measured for impact.” (Additional Support for Learning Action Plan, 2020)

Annex 1: Children with Additional Supports Needs (2017-2022)

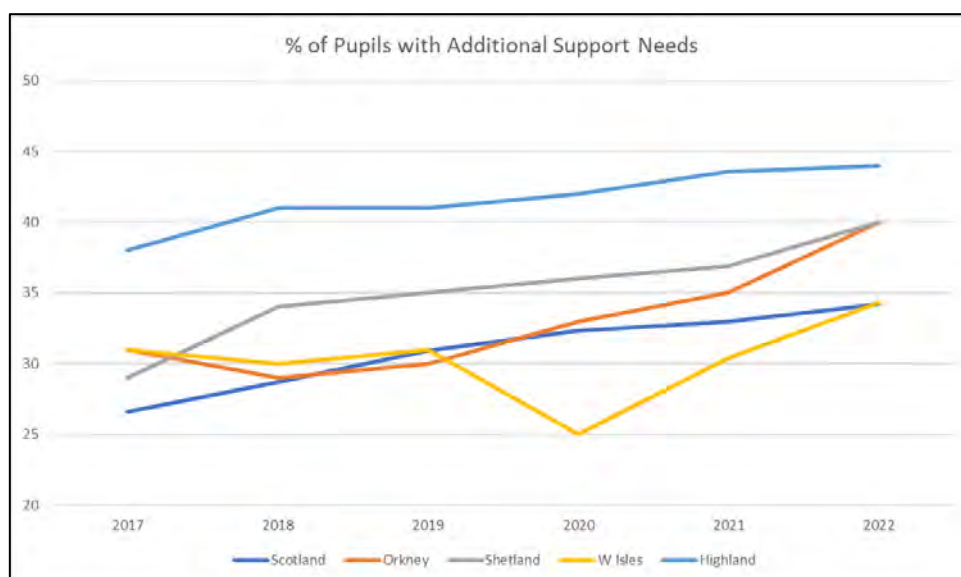
Between 2017 and 2022, the number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs in Scotland increased from 27% to 34%. In the same period, in Orkney, the number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs increased from 31% to 40%. In 2017, the number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs in Scotland was 27%.

- The lowest incidence of additional support needs (across all local authorities in Scotland) in 2017 was 14%.
- The highest incidence of additional support needs (across all local authorities in Scotland) in 2017 was 38%.
- The number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs in Orkney in 2017 was 31%.

In 2022, the number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs in Scotland was 34%.

- The lowest incidence of additional support needs (across all local authorities in Scotland) in 2022 was 18%.
- The highest incidence of additional support needs (across all local authorities in Scotland) in 2022 was 48%.
- The number (as a percentage of the total pupil population) of children with additional support needs in 2021 Orkney was 40%.

The change (2017-2022) is illustrated below. Included is the national figure, the Orkney Islands Council figure, and figures for Highland Council, the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Council of the Western Isles) and Shetland Islands Council. All of these local authorities are in the Northern Alliance Regional Collaborative.



Comment: The data would indicate that the numbers of children with additional support needs in Orkney, Shetland and Highland are above the national average. While more children have their additional support needs recognised/recorded in Highland, we can see that Orkney has had a more rapid increase, particularly between 2021 and 2022. It is also worth noting that the percentage of secondary pupils with additional support needs in Orkney for 2021 was 50.5%. The figure for primary pupils stands at 31%.

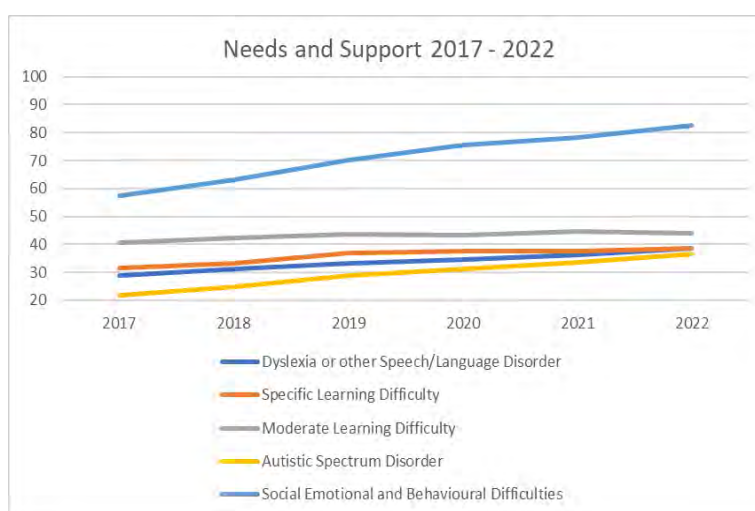
It is worth noting that this period of time encompasses the COVID 19 pandemic. While it is difficult to quantify the impact of the pandemic on the proportion of children with additional support needs, the Children and Young People's commissioner has completed a study which finds that on a national basis "those with disabilities or additional support needs have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic." In addition, "Provision of education for children and young people in this group is inconsistent and uptake in school hubs is extremely low." This suggests that there was a potential lack of provision which may have added to the complexity and quantity of need during this time. This was reflected in our own context during the pandemic.

Annex 2: Needs and Support

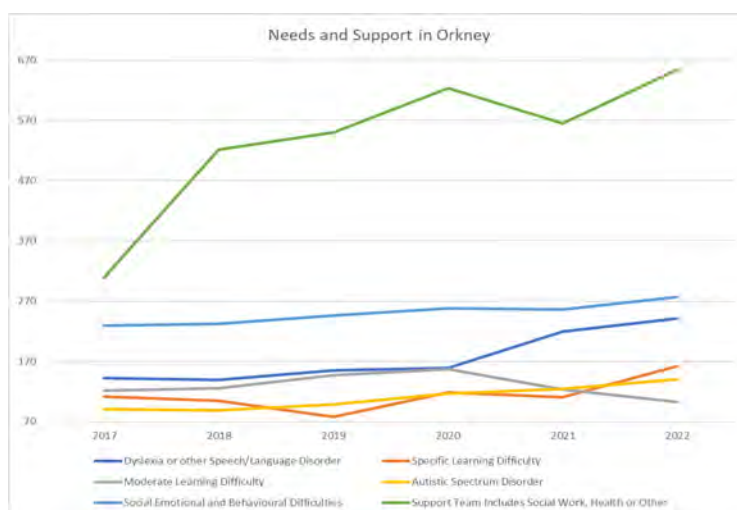
The chart below focuses on which additional support needs have driven the increase over the last 6 years on a national level (2017-2022)

Across many categories, numbers have continued to increase at a relatively steady rate. The numbers on the chart below represent the number of children in each category per 1000 pupils. In some areas, while numbers have gone up, the % change is 'modest'. An example of this is 'moderate learning difficulties'. The increase sits at around 10% over the 6-year period.

In contrast, there has been quite significant increase with respect to Autistic Spectrum Continuum and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, which have seen increases of around 35%.



Comment: In the chart below we can compare this national data with our own Orkney specific data over the same time period.



For clarity, the term moderate learning difficulty is used to describe pupils who are having difficulty accessing the curriculum, even when the learning is well differentiated, and support is put in place. This difficulty would be undiagnosed.

The term specific learning difficulty could describe a range of diagnosed conditions that don't fit into any of the other categories described.

The Y axis on this chart represents the total number of pupils for each category in Orkney.

On the chart above however, the make-up of the team around the child is also noted (green line) and it is evident that there has been a quite significant increase in the number of services who are involved in the support arrangements. While this by definition is a positive outcome, it will also mean that more time is required to manage and plan the process. This includes the need for support for learning assistants, for example, to attend and participate in planning and review meetings. It should also be noted that this involvement is a good proxy for understanding how complex the needs are.

In terms of the local trends in support needs, we can see a significant increase in children with Dyslexia or other speech/language disorders between 2020 and 2022. This corresponds with a similar drop in Moderate Learning Difficulties. This could indicate more accurate classification and diagnosis in this instance. There is also a steady increase in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is interesting to note the correlation in pattern between the ASD line and the Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties.



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.	Support for Learning Strategy
Service / service area responsible.	Education
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Steve Arnold
Date of assessment.	02/05/2023
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	New function.

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	To audit and the current resource for Support for Learning and highlight the current unmet need.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	No
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	All children and young people in Education, Education staff, families of school-age children and young people
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	CLD, Education Service Managers, Pupil Support, Educational Psychology, Head Teachers, Early Years Team
Is there any existing data and /	

<p>or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>National Census Data is used to establish existing Additional Support Needs across our schools. We can also use this data to track trends over time.</p> <p>As an Education Service we track data to do with Additional Support Needs, attendance and Child's Plans, all of which inform this report.</p>
<p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.</p>	<p>Yes. We know that care-experienced children and young people and those on free school meals are more likely to have Additional Support Needs</p>
<p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?</p>	
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p>	<p>Greater levels of provision would provide more opportunities to support young people who are experiencing difficulties related to sexuality and inclusion</p>
<p>4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p>	<p>Greater levels of provision would provide more opportunities to support young people who are transitioning or identify as trans</p>
<p>5. Pregnancy and maternity.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>6. Age: people of different ages.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>8. Caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>Greater levels of provision would provide more opportunities to support young people who are identified as being young carers</p>
<p>9. Care experienced.</p>	<p>Care Experienced Children and Young People are</p>

	more likely to have Additional Support Needs and are more likely to need support to raise attendance in school.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Greater levels of provision would provide more opportunities to support young people with a disability
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Greater levels of provision would provide more opportunities to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

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?	

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	No.
What action is to be taken?	Report to be presented to committee
Who will undertake it?	SA
When will it be done?	07 June 2023
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Monthly monitoring by the service management team

Signature:



Date: 02/05/2023

Name: STEVE ARNOLD

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

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