Submission from Shetland Islands Council

Children’s Services in Shetland would like the following comments noted regarding the proposed amendment to require prospective head teachers to have the Standard for Headship prior to taking up post. As a very rural, remote local authority, we are concerned about the impact this amendment, if it goes forward, would have on our head teacher recruitment. We already have difficulties recruiting head teachers, and this difficulty is exacerbated the more rural and more remote the school is within Shetland. It took us the whole of the last school year to recruit a head teacher for Fair Isle Primary School, a school with four pupils and one nursery child. When we finally succeeded we had one applicant. The year before that it took us six months to recruit a head teacher for Foula Primary School, a school with three pupils in it. When we recruited to that post, we eventually had two applicants.

Our schools range in size from currently a total pupil roll of 1 to a total pupil roll of 915. It is not appropriate that the exactly the same type of leadership skills apply to such a range of head teacher posts. Many of our head teacher posts, for instance still have a large class teaching commitment within them, owing to the size of the school.

From 2018, if any candidate applying for a head teacher post in one of our very small school is required to possess the Into Headship qualification, we doubt who we would ever get applying. We respectfully request that some common sense and some flexibility be built into this amendment to take account of the range and diversity of school across Scotland.

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