Local Authority response to Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1409

North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Services

1. What are your views on the issues raised in the petition and the Committee’s subsequent discussion?

North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the opportunity to respond. In relation to the concept of a fully trained workforce, NLC supports the premise of lifelong learning and supports its workforce to plan CPD around their responsibilities in the workplace.

While it is advantageous for all staff working in the field of additional support needs to have basic skills knowledge, mandatory training may be difficult to implement due to current job descriptions and changing workforce.

2. Does your local authority provide continuous professional development (CPD) for teaching staff in additional support needs?

It is North Lanarkshire Council’s aim that all children and young people have their additional support needs identified and met to ensure that they have every opportunity to become: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors, where possible, within their own community.

Children and young people with additional support needs benefit from North Lanarkshire’s ‘Policy into Practice’ guidelines which are a translation of The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004 as amended by The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009, and are in place in every educational establishment.

At least one representative from every establishment has received training in respect of these guidelines which encompass all planning processes linking Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child.

Within North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Services Support for Learning section, training opportunities are provided by a range of staff including the Educational Psychological Service, and Inclusion Support Base staff, either on a single agency basis but often as part of a multiagency team in collaboration with colleagues from Health and Social Work.

This ensures that within all early years and school establishments:

- children and young people benefit from a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to meeting their needs,
- additional support needs are identified as early as possible,
- provision for children and young people is planned through a systematic approach of assessment, implementation, review and evaluation of next steps.

North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Services is committed to equipping its workforce with skills, knowledge and understanding to enable staff to meet the needs of all children and young people they work with. A workforce learning and development
programme is being developed in line with North and South Lanarkshire’s Children’s Workforce Learning and Development Strategy.

North Lanarkshire Learning and Leisure Services’ Quality Improvement Service provides all early years staff and school staff with a range of professional development through training, support and development opportunities to meet the needs of children and young people with additional support needs including those with ASD.

North Lanarkshire Learning and Leisure Services also draw on the expertise of teams such as the Educational Psychology Service which delivers training to early years staff and school staff who work to support children and young people with specific additional support needs.

Current professional development opportunities available within North Lanarkshire Council:

**ASD specific - training, support and development programme for school/establishment staff**

North Lanarkshire Learning and Leisure Services’ training, support and development programme for Autism Spectrum Disorders is available twice a year for staff in early years establishments and schools, early years workers, teachers, senior management, classroom assistants and additional support needs assistants.

The full day training programme provides an in-depth introduction to ASD and is delivered on a multiagency basis. The full day is followed up by four half-day workshops. Attendance at both the full day and the workshops is compulsory. The workshops cover areas such as school environment, sensory issues, managing challenging behaviours, social stories, visual support and transitions, but can be tailored to meet specific requests from staff.

**Children and young people with sensory impairments**

Ongoing training is offered by specialist teaching staff to all early years and school staff to promote understanding, develop skills and use of resources to support this group of children and young people. Training is tailored to the individual needs of the child or young person and delivered to staff to support their access to the curriculum.

**Children and young people who are ‘Looked After’ (LAC).**

North Lanarkshire Council has a dedicated Inclusion Support Base where staff deliver training across the authority to early years and school staff working with children and young people who are ‘Looked After’ (LAC). They also provide training to school staff on The Nurturing School, Restorative Practice, Peer Mediation and Anger Management.

**Professional Development – tertiary access**

North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Services provide opportunities for education staff to access professional development courses, which include modular, certificate, and diploma courses related to additional support needs including ASD through tertiary education opportunities.
A nine-week twilight training programme is offered by in term 1 and in term 3 to all teaching staff who wish to embark on further study leading to the postgraduate diploma in support for learning or the postgraduate certificate and diploma in additional support needs and/or autism. This is in preparation for access to courses offered by Strathclyde and Glasgow Universities in the main.

Access to RNIB twelve-month accredited course is now available for teaching staff working with children and young people with multiple impairments (MDVI).

3. What support or training does your authority provide to non-teaching staff to help them deal with pupils who have additional support needs?

Whole School opportunities

All schools have a linked Educational Psychologist and Additional Support Manager who are able to deliver whole school staff training outwith the training calendar on a range of areas relating to additional support needs. Training is delivered as a response to needs identified by school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, working with pupils with additional support needs. Non-teaching staff also have access to specific courses in the QIS catalogue.

Areas may include ASD, Down’s Syndrome, Attachment Disorders, Dyslexia.

Whole school training opportunities can and have included both teaching staff, school management staff, class teachers and non teaching staff: classroom assistants, additional support needs assistants, janitorial and catering staff. Training can be tailored to meet the specific circumstances of the school/establishment.

Children and young people with physical disabilities

North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Services offers a two day moving and handling training course followed up by an annual, one day refresher training with physiotherapy and occupational therapy input to support the planned programme for all classroom assistants and additional support needs assistants who work with children with a physical disability. Currently 160 staff across the authority receive such training. Staff within 27 establishments have also received training to raise their awareness of safe movement for children with physical disability and attitudes to disability.

Contractors – transport

All contractors who provide transport for children and young people to and from school are required to attend a half-day training event at the start of every new school year. The training focuses on Child Protection, supporting children with additional support needs including raising awareness of ASD. It provides taxi drivers and escorts with guidance on how to support the children and young people they transport.

ASD specific training, support and development programme for non class based staff, other professionals and other agencies

North Lanarkshire Learning and Leisure Services’ training, support and development programme for other professionals, agencies and voluntary groups is run three times a year and is open to all in North Lanarkshire who come into contact with a child or young
person with ASD or who support parents who have a child or young person with ASD. The programme consists of a half-day introduction to ASD and is delivered on a multiagency basis.

The course is open to everyone in Health, e.g. Public Health Practitioners, GPs, Dentists; Social Work Services; Community Learning Teams; Partnership Officers; Police; Housing; Youth Justice; Voluntary Organisations e.g. YMCA, Barnardo’s.

**Professional Development – tertiary access**

As part of classroom assistants’ and additional support needs assistants’ professional development opportunities, staff can access a range of development courses pertinent to additional support needs including ASD, being offered by local college provision in Coatbridge College and Motherwell College.