

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 28 MAY 2002

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT TO PUPILS

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of a change in the organisation of learning support services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the time it was formed, East Ayrshire Council inherited two teams of peripatetic learning support teachers from the former regional council. One of these "Network Teams" covered the south of the Authority and the other was allocated to the north. These teachers provide a valued service to pupils principally in mainstream schools. There are, however, also other specialist support services which include a visual impairment (VI) team, a bilingual support team, the hospital education service and the home visiting service for pre-five children.
- 2.2 Additional support is provided by an educational audiology service and a hearing impairment (HI) peripatetic service that is jointly managed with North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire. These two services are not considered under the proposals in this paper due to this specific management arrangement.
- 2.3 Since the time the peripatetic support services were formed, the educational conditions have changed significantly. There is now a much greater emphasis on mainstream integration, and therefore learning support services are in greater demand. At the same time, parents have increased expectations arising from the particular learning needs of their children including sensory impairment, dyslexia, dyspraxia, behavioural disorder, Downs' Syndrome, and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). There is therefore a much greater need to target specialist support to where it is needed in the classroom.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 At its meeting of 11 April 2002, the Education Committee approved a proposal for Learning Partnerships that would give a greater emphasis to meeting local needs. It was envisaged that the Learning Partnerships would have an enhanced role in the deployment of staff, including learning support specialists.
- 3.2 Within the current Area Learning Support Network Team, the two posts of

Network Support Co-ordinator will be disestablished and replaced with a single post of Learning Support Manager. This officer will be responsible for the overall strategy for learning support delivery. Central to that strategy will be the direct allocation of 80% of learning support staffing for management at learning partnership level, supported by the manager. The allocation will be determined by use of a weighted formula agreed with head teachers. The remaining 20% will be under the direct control of the manager in order to meet local excess needs beyond the base allocation, the needs of specific children and support for continuous professional development (CPD).

- 3.3** An essential feature of this strategic approach will be the development of specialisms within the learning support services. The teachers in the present Network have considerable skills in particular areas of special educational needs. Deployment will aim to meet the balance of need across the Learning Partnerships. As the concept develops, teams with a balanced package of skills and expertise will be formed to support pupils at local level. These balanced teams will be able to play a key role in developing packages of CPD that will be available to staff of mainstream schools and the service generally.
- 3.4** In recognition of the need to deliver better integrated services, the Visual Impairment Team, Hospital Education Service, Language Unit and Bilingual Support Team will be brought under the direct control of the Learning Support Manager. In order to facilitate the management of this diverse group of staff two additional promoted posts, at the level of principal teacher will be created, although the overall staffing complement will remain the same. These changes will complete one of the recommendations from the Best Value Service Review in special educational needs.
- 3.5** Consultation has taken place with learning support networks about these proposals.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1	1x Learning Support Manager* additional costs @ £2370	£2370
	2 Principal Teachers responsibility* @ £3816 =	£7632
	Total	£10002
	Employment Costs	<u>£2060</u>
	GRAND TOTAL	£12062

*These posts will be subject to job sizing under "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century". These proposals will be financed within the existing budgetary allocations.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) agree the proposals for the restructuring of learning support services;
and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/GRS
7 May 2002

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, (01563-576089).

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Learning Partnerships, Education Committee 11 April 2002

Implementation Officer: Graham Short

AGENDA