

Dumfries & Galloway Parent Forum Meeting
Monday 20th November 2017
6:30pm, Castle Douglas High School

Present:	Mel McGill (Chair)	Nithsdale – St Andrew’s PS/St Joseph’s College
	Laura Moodie (Vice-Chair)	Stewartry – Borgue PS
	Sian Roberts	Wigtownshire – Portpatrick PS
	Lisa Fleming	Nithsdale – Locharbriggs PS
	Jill Sloan	Wigtownshire – Glenluce PS/Douglas Ewart HS
	Glidden Chalmers	Nithsdale – Heathhall PS
	Alison Lindsay	Nithsdale – Kirkbean PS
	Andrew Bielinski	Stewartry – Dalry
	Hew Smith	DGC – Integration & Inclusion Manager
	Clare Clanachan	DGC – Supporting Learners Manager
Apologies:	Hazel Smith	Wigtownshire – Whithorn PS/Douglas Ewart HS
	Amy Watt	Stewartry – Dalbeattie
	George Jamieson	Annandale & Eskdale – Eastriggs PS/Annan Academy

1. Welcome and Apologies

Mel welcomed all to the meeting and all introduced themselves for the benefit of new parents joining this meeting.

Hew Smith and Clare Clanachan joined us from Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Education Service to give information on Supporting Learners strategies/changes to service.

2. Approval of minutes of meeting 25th September 2017

The minutes were approved unchanged and actions followed up.

One query regarding timeline for consultation on school holiday dates as there seems to have been no action so far.

Action: Mel to contact John Thin

3. Supporting Learners – update on implementation.

Hew and Clare presented information on the current situation within the Authority’s Supporting Learners service.

This time last year, after budget adjustments and restructuring plans had been implemented, the evidence indicated that the Service could be more effective. A number of managerial changes have been made to address these issues, as circulated to the group. Clare C will be picking up the responsibility for parental engagement in this area and is keen to work with all parents and the Forum to ensure good relations between families needing support and the local authority. Hew acknowledges there is a need to improve parental engagement to move away from an adversarial relationship, and to develop the partnership with pupils and their families, and less of a “them and us” situation.

Hew stated there is a need to make sure that the resources we have and how we use them best match the expectations of the families engaging with the Service. There is a need to ask the people who take part in the process whether it worked, regardless of any outcome. Though the outcome may be the same, it can only help all parties to understand the decisions made and the process required.

From Engage document sent to all head teachers*:

“In response to the recent departure of two senior managers, we have reviewed our management arrangements and have moved away from an area based model towards a portfolio based way of working.

As Integration and Inclusion Manager, Hew Smith has overall responsibility for the Supporting Learners Service and Mary Thomson will continue in her role as Education Officer for the Service.

Dorothy Aitchison and Clare Clanachan (Supporting Learners Managers) will have strategic oversight of ASL for all primary schools across the region and Colin Turner (Supporting Learners Manager) will provide this oversight for secondary schools. As the newly appointed Principal Educational Psychologist, Linda Biggar will be responsible for taking forward the Educational Psychology Service Improvement Plan.”

**full document included in Appendix 1*

The structure of the service has been examined and early retirements taken which has given an opportunity to change. The Authority wants to future-proof to some extent, but with such a broad remit – anything outside of the “norm” could now be considered a need for additional support – this is challenging.

While there are now separate streams for primary and secondary pupils - by working alongside each other the hope is to allow for smooth transitions – there is one point of contact for each cluster, one of three Supporting Learning Managers. The service has moved away from the 4 localities teams in favour of the cluster model, redistributing areas of responsibility within the team: Hew Smith as Integration and Inclusion Manager, 3 Supporting Learning Managers, an Educational Officer for ASL and a Principal Educational Psychologist*. These changes will be implemented this term, ie before January 2018.

**more information in Appendix 1*

Q: What does breaking down the service into primary and secondary mean for transition from P7 to S1?

A: Transition is key for the whole department, all staff make the best plans possible for the pupils, while recognising existing relationships between the schools as well as the capabilities of the team. It is key to manage the expectations of all the team as well as those of the schools, the child and their families to ensure a smooth move.

All 3 Leads communicate regularly already, and are looking for more opportunities to ensure all information is passed from the primary team to the secondary team.

The new regional management arrangements will mean that resources can be allocated more effectively rather than not being available because they are in the wrong area. This will make it easier to move resources around on an annual basis, as cohorts of needs change.

Hew spoke about several documents they are looking at within the Authority:

The current Scottish Government consultation on Excellence and Equity for All: Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming is sending a very clear message to local authorities on what is expected of them in terms of supporting learners.

The Supporting Children's Learning Draft Code of Practice Third Edition 2017 includes guidance to recognise the competency of the child in proceedings, not only the input from the family.

Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (Nov 2017) gives guidelines for anti-bullying strategies. Currently, we are working on the implementation of a SEEMiS module for recording information on bullying within the schools.

The Inclusion Support Team are continuing to move away from the historic "punitive" approach to managing behaviour towards a more restorative approach in line with the latest Scottish Government guidance, Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (June 2017) with the aim of preventing and managing school exclusions. Exclusion figures have fallen significantly in the last 6/7 years, and it remains the option of last resort. All formal exclusion figures are reported to Scottish Government.

Clare C spoke of how challenging it is to engage parents with consultations and asked how the Forum can help.

We suggested, as always, a need to simplify information and questions – there are often very good messages within consultation documents but they are usually hidden in jargon or over-complicated wording making them difficult for the average parent to engage with. A 'translation' of questions is often required.

There is a general feeling, with both Government and Local Authority consultations, that parental involvement is ignored or that decisions have already been made as there is never any feedback about how the parental voice has influenced or been considered. For parents to participate there needs to be a way to show that we can indeed influence, make a difference, to a decision somewhere. Could Parent Councils that have taken part in a consultation be given feedback to show how their input was considered or added to the decision-making process?

Q: How does the increase in funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) affect the remit of ASL?

A: There are more and more children coming into ELC with behavioural issues as part of additional support needs – the funding application to Scottish Government has taken this into account. Simply, there are not enough Learning Assistants in the region – as with all roles within teaching, it is very hard to recruit in D&G. Ideally, we want the most experienced working with those with the most complex needs but this does not always work geographically across our region. It is very hard to balance the staff available with the very different needs of every school. The matrix worked better this year, with the introduction of moderation that all staff found very useful. Moderation will give a standardised approach but still allow individual school needs to be met as best as possible. The Authority want to keep staff where they are where possible to allow continuity

of relationships for pupils and staff. The matrix gave a better understanding of needs across the region, but the process will be simplified again and there is a hope to minimise the movement of staff.

The ideal scenario for ELC is for the Health Visitor to identify needs, who will pass this information on to Educational Visitor → Early Learning & Childcare staff → P1 teacher, but this does not always happen.

Support is allocated based on information given by the school; the Authority would question why, for example, a child that had support in P1 no longer needed it in P2. There are systems in place to follow up on changes in circumstance or need.

Q: Why it is that there is no support to nurseries for children who have English as their second language? Apparently, support is not available until primary school. Surely this only isolates children if they cannot verbally communicate with their peers. Also, when support is required, why does it seem to take so long to get that help?

A: There is support available from the English as an Additional Language Team*

**see Appendix 2 for full answer*

4. Information on various topics:

- Dumfries Learning Town P7 Transition Evening

This year there will be no Transition event for pupils and parent to attend at any of the 4 Dumfries secondary schools. The Authority has reasoned that this is to avoid “a beauty parade” as 2 schools are currently under construction but many parents feel this takes away the chance for P7 pupils to interact with the individual schools’ staff and pupils to give them the chance to feel they are making the right choice for their secondary education, for where they will feel most comfortable. An event is to be held at D&G College and whilst we understand this is a neutral venue so as not to be seen to be promoting one school over the other, it does not give the ‘vibe’ of a school setting for the young people.

It is understood that the concept behind the Dumfries Learning Town is that all 4 of the schools, no matter a pupil’s catchment area, will offer the same quality of learning experiences, but there is still parental choice available when it comes to the decision as to where a child will continue their education in Dumfries and Galloway and it is very disappointing that the opportunity to see around the 4 schools on offer has been denied this year. Offering schools the chance to hold open days in the summer term does not make up for this lost opportunity as placement decisions will have been made by that point, and inviting parents to make appointments to tour schools during the day is an unacceptable request to make of senior management staff in the schools, given this invitation could, in theory, be taken up by hundreds of families.

This event also takes away an opportunity for the secondary schools to showcase their staff and pupils’ work and successes, as all other secondary schools in the region have the opportunity to do at their own transition events designed for parents and P7s.

The Forum did write to Gillian Brydson (Head of Education) stating their disappointment at the organisation/handling of this event and Mel spoke with her about the decision to continue with the event as planned, the result being that the event was planned as an information evening about transition, with all 4 head teachers speaking at the event to represent the 4 schools, rather than an

open evening. [NB Mel wrote again following this meeting to state that the Forum found this totally unacceptable. No reply has been received at this time.]

- **Small Schools Consultations**

We have received no further information at this time about the ongoing consultations at Ae, Kirkbean and Garlieston Primary schools.

A question was raised about any potential changes to this policy given the new collaboration with the Ayrshire authorities; perhaps changes also to transport policies?

- **Presumption of Mainstreaming Consultation**

Extract from overview on Scottish Government website:

“Excellence and Equity for All: Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming aims to bridge the gap between legislation, policy and day-to-day experience, to ensure that local authorities have the guidance required to help their decision making in applying the presumption of mainstreaming. It is intended to provide guidance on applying the presumption and looks to encourage a child centred approach to making decisions about placement. As the implementation of the presumption of mainstreaming requires a commitment to inclusive practice and approaches to be effective, the guidance clearly links inclusive practice with the presumption throughout and includes key features of inclusion and guidance on how to improve inclusive practice in schools.”

<https://consult.gov.scot/supporting-learners/presumption-of-mainstreaming/>

Comments from Forum discussion on consultation:

- There is huge focus on inclusion, none on attainment
- There seems to be an underlying message of keeping the status quo but justifying it
- This is an ideal opportunity for ASL and ASN children and parents to have their say
- There is an assumption that mainstreaming is good for everyone, but it is not always good for the child with needs, or for the other children in that class
- Parents of children with no needs should be involved as these issues affect all pupils in a class

Action: Forum will highlight this consultation to Parent Councils and aim to ‘translate’ the consultation information and questions to allow meaningful engagement from parents

Action: Mel to speak with Clare Clanachan to ask what the consultation could mean for D&G? What can parents say to make a difference? Is what we say going to be possible to implement?

- **Empowering Schools Consultation**

Extract from overview on Scottish Government website:

“A Consultation on the Provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill: The Education (Scotland) Bill that is being introduced later this parliamentary year is to create a school and teacher-led education system. The Bill will establish a Headteachers’ Charter which sets out the right and responsibilities of the headteachers, empowering them to be the leaders of learning in their schools. The Bill will also improve parental and community engagement in school life and in learning outside of school, and strengthen the voice of children and young people, by actively promoting and supporting pupil participation. In addition, the Bill will provide the legislative underpinning for the establishment of Regional Improvement Collaboratives which will provide professional learning and leadership, support in both curriculum and specific sectors, sharing of

good practice, and peer to peer collaboration, among other responsibilities. The Bill will also enable registration of other educational professionals with the Education Workforce Council, taking on the responsibilities of the GTCS and Community Learning and Development Standards Council. This will establish professional standards for other education professionals within the workforce.”

<https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/education-scotland-bill/>

***Action:** Forum will highlight this consultation to Parent Councils and aim to ‘translate’ the consultation information and questions to allow meaningful engagement from parents*

- **The Cost of the School Day Parent Council Toolkit**

Work carried out by the National Parent Forum of Scotland has been included in this reviewed document to reflect the national picture of hidden costs in a pupil’s school day. It is a very useful toolkit for all Parent Councils to “review and audit current practices in their schools, consider the impact of costs on low income families in their schools and to learn about simple actions taken by Parent Councils across Scotland which have reduced school costs and helped children and young people from low income households to participate fully at school.”

<https://www.npfs.org.uk/2017/11/cost-of-the-school-day-parent-council-toolkit/>

Dumfries & Galloway Authority have also produced a regional version of this document:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/omkp727v5y62fvv/Cost%20of%20the%20School%20Day%20D%26G%202016.pdf?dl=0>

NB: If Dropbox link does not work, document can be sent separately

- **Regional Improvement Collaboratives**

These are groups of local authorities coming together to share best practice and to work together to submit Regional Improvement Plans for the Education offered in those regions to Scottish Government. Dumfries and Galloway sits in the South West Collaborative, along with East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Councils.

It is not clear at this time how Parent Forums will be included in these plans, but it is hoped, given the level of emphasis placed on Parental Involvement in recent legislation, that representation will be sought.

Press release from D&G Council:

“Following an agreement between Scottish Government and COSLA earlier this year, each local authority in Scotland will belong to a Regional Improvement collaborative grouping based on local assessment of where the most meaningful work can be undertaken on a partnership basis.

South West Collaborative is made up of the following councils: East Ayrshire Council; North Ayrshire Council; South Ayrshire Council; and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

A Regional Lead was appointed by Chief Executives in conjunction with Education Scotland. Thereafter a Regional Plan must be fully developed by 31 January 2018 - as Education Scotland and Audit Scotland have already confirmed the strong leadership of our Education Authority we will play an important part in the development of our regional plan. The positive progress being made in our schools and our ambitions for all schools in Dumfries and Galloway over the next school year have been agreed by the Council; these regional arrangements will support this good work."

The Forum is interested to see whether any parental input is required in these collaborations?!

- **Responses to recent Scottish Government Fair Funding Consultation:**

The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) and the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) have submitted responses to the Scottish Government's Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education consultation. These were reports analysing survey results on what parents thought about the idea of Head Teachers and Parent Councils having greater control over individual school finances.

NPFS: <https://www.npfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/NPFS-Fair-Funding-Response.pdf>

SPTC (link at end of article) <https://www.sptc.info/parents-raise-concerns-about-headteachers-controlling-school-funds-18-october-2017/>

Dates of next meetings, all at Castle Douglas High School at 6.30pm

- Monday 19th February 2018
- Monday 21st May 2018 (AGM & meeting)

Appendix 1 – Information from Hew Smith re Supporting Learners

Appendix 2 – Information from Hew Smith re EAL in ELC settings

Appendix 1 – Information from Hew Smith re Supporting Learners

Document 1 of 4

Engage Weekly Update –

RAISING ATTAINMENT / WORKING WITH PARTNERS / BUILDING CAPACITY

UPDATES

TITLE Supporting Learners management update

In response to the recent departure of two senior managers, we have reviewed our management arrangements and have moved away from an area based model towards a portfolio based way of working.

As Integration and Inclusion Manager, Hew Smith has overall responsibility for the Supporting Learners Service and Mary Thomson will continue in her role as Education Officer for the Service.

Dorothy Aitchison and Clare Clanachan (Supporting Learners Managers) will have strategic oversight of ASL for all primary schools across the region and Colin Turner (Supporting Learners Manager) will provide this oversight for secondary schools. As the newly appointed Principal Educational Psychologist, Linda Biggar will be responsible for taking forward the Educational Psychology Service Improvement Plan.

Please find attached details of school allocations and the Supporting Learners Management team portfolios.

Transitioning to the new management arrangements will be fully implemented by the end of term. In order to support you during this transition period, please find attached additional information and Supporting Learners contact details.

Hew Smith
Integration and Inclusion Manager



Supporting Learners Service – Management Portfolios

Hew Smith – Integration & Inclusion Manager					
Supporting Learners Manager Clare Clanachan Inclusion Support Service Reduction in primary exclusions Parental engagement strategy Strategic oversight of ASL for primary schools	Supporting Learners Manager Dorothy Aitchison ASL assessment, planning and review Performance and quality assurance framework Strategic oversight of ASL for primary schools	Supporting Learners Manager Colin Turner Policy updates Resource management Reduction in secondary exclusions Strategic oversight of ASL for secondary schools	Education Officer –ASL Mary Thomson Building Capacity Staff development Resourced Provision Autism Provision School Improvement planning Strategic oversight for Learning Centres	Principal Educational Psychologist Linda Biggar Implementation of the Educational Psychology Improvement Plan. Education placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Residential Provision (RPG) • in Private Provider day placements • requests from out-with the Authority 	Support schools to identify barriers to learning/assess need. Support schools to meet the needs of learners Repeat year/Early entry/Deferred entry requests
Manage and evaluate the impact of ASL resources on outcomes for children and young people. Resource requests from primary schools Budget responsibility	Manage and evaluate the impact of ASL resources on outcomes for children and young people. Resource requests from primary schools Budget responsibility	Manage and evaluate the impact of ASL resources on outcomes for children and young people. Resource requests from secondary schools Budget responsibility	ASL staff Training Requests Multi Agency Standing Group/monitoring of annual CSP reviews Budget responsibility	Support schools to identify barriers to learning/assess need. Support schools to meet the needs of learners Repeat year/Early entry/Deferred entry requests Budget responsibility	Requests for Assistance
Cluster meetings Requests for Assistance	Cluster meetings Requests for Assistance	Cluster meetings Requests for Assistance	Cluster meetings primary/secondary. Resourced Provision requests	Group consultation Requests for Assistance	Requests for Assistance

Primary Exclusions	Sensory Services	Secondary Exclusions	Learning Centres	Represent Education on Permanency/Kinship/Fostering & Adoption panels Escalation contact for LAC
Inclusion Support Service LAC/LAC reviews Workforce Development CSPs	Early Level Services SSSC RAG CSPs	Allocation process Home Education Team teach Complaints (PO) Transport (PO)	CALL/ACE Home Tuition ASL Tribunals Mediation Equipment purchase	
Inclusion Support Manager (with responsibility for PT Inclusion Support and Inclusion support team)	Early Level Support Manager (with responsibility for Educational Visitors and Early Level Family Support Officers)	Principal Officer Opportunity for All Officers	Resourced Provision Development Officer Autism outreach service	Depute Principal Education Psychologist Education Psychology team
PT ASL (with responsibility for HI, VI, EAL/GT and ASLTS) Learning Centre PTs (shared responsibility with HT)	PT ASL (with responsibility for HI, VI, EAL/GT and ASLTS) Learning Centre PTs (shared responsibility with HT)		PT Building Capacity Senior Learning Assistants (shared responsibility with HT) Pupil Support Manager (with responsibility for LAC tracking and monitoring officer)	

Supporting Learners contact details (as at October 2017)

Hew Smith	Inclusion and Integration Manager	122-124 Irish Street, Dumfries	Internal: 64455	Hew.Smith@dumgal.gov.uk
Dorothy Aitchison	Supporting Learners Manager	122-124 Irish Street, Dumfries	Internal: 62221	Dorothy.Aitchison@dumgal.gov.uk
Clare Clanachan	Supporting Learners Manager	122-124 Irish Street, Dumfries	Internal: 62948	Clare.Clanachan@dumgal.gov.uk
Colin Turner	Supporting Learners Manager	122-124 Irish Street, Dumfries	Internal: 67270	Colin.Turner2@dumgal.gov.uk
Mary Thomson	Education Officer	MacMillan Hall, Newton Stewart	Internal: 60411	Mary.Thomson@dumgal.gov.uk
Linda Biggar	Principal Educational Psychologist	St Teresa's Education Centre, Dumfries	Internal: 62945	Linda.Biggarr@dumgal.gov.uk
Audrey Lowrie	Education Safeguarding Manager	122-124 Irish Street, Dumfries	Internal: 64451	Audrey.Lowrie@dumgal.gov.uk

SUPPORTING LEARNERS MANAGER ALLOCATION

Annandale and Eskdale			
Annan Academy Cluster		Lockerbie Academy Cluster	
Colin Turner	Annan Academy	Colin Turner	Lockerbie Academy
Clare Clanachan	Brydekirk & St Columba's RC Partnership	Dorothy Aitchison	Applegarth & Hutton Partnership
	Carrutherstown & Cummertrees Partnership		Eaglesfield, Hoddom & Hottsbridge Partnership
	Hecklegirth Primary		Johnstonebridge & Nethermill Partnership
	Kirkpatrick Fleming & Springfield Partnership		Lochmaben Primary
	Eastriggs Primary		Lockerbie Primary
	Elmvale Primary		Hightae Primary, St Mungo & Tundergarth Partnership
	Gretna Primary		
Newington Primary			
Langholm Academy Cluster		Moffat Academy Cluster	
Colin Turner	Langholm Academy	Colin Turner	Moffat Academy
Dorothy Aitchison	Langholm Primary	Clare Clanachan	Moffat Primary
	Canonbie Primary		Beattock Primary

Nithsdale			
Dumfries Academy Cluster		Dumfries High School Cluster	
Colin Turner	Dumfries Academy	Colin Turner	Dumfries High School
Clare Clanachan	Kirkbean & New Abbey Partnership	Clare Clanachan	Ae & Amisfield Partnership
	Laurieknowe Primary		Brownhall & Caerlaverock Partnership
	Loreburn Primary		Calside Primary
	St Michael's Primary		Collin Primary
	Troqueer Primary		Georgetown Primary
			Heathhall Primary
	Locharbriggs Primary		
	Noblehill Primary		
Maxwelltown High School Cluster		St Joseph's College Cluster	
Colin Turner	Maxwelltown High School	Colin Turner	St Josephs College
Clare Clanachan	Cargenbridge Primary	Clare Clanachan	St Andrew's RC Primary
	Hollywood Primary		St Teresa's RC Primary
	Lincluden Primary		
	Lochside Primary		
	Shawhead Primary		
	St Ninian's Primary		
Sanquhar Academy Cluster		Wallace Hall Academy Cluster	
Colin Turner	Sanquhar Academy	Colin Turner	Wallace Hall Academy
Dorothy Aitchison	Kelloholm Primary	Dorothy Aitchison	Closeburn & Penpont Primary
	Sanquhar Primary		Duncow, Dunscore & Moniaive Partnership

Nithsdale	
Specialist Provision	
Clare Clanachan	Elmbank School
Colin Turner	Langlands School

Stewartry			
Castle Douglas High & Glenkens Cluster		Dalbeattie High School Cluster	
Colin Turner	Castle Douglas High School	Colin Turner	Dalbeattie High School
	Dalry Secondary school		
Dorothy Aitchison	Castle Douglas Primary	Dorothy Aitchison	Colvend, Kirkgunzeon & Palnackie Partnership
	Carsphairn, Dalry & Kells Partnership		Dalbeattie Primary
	Crossmichael & Gelston Partnership		
	Hardgate, Lochrutton & Springholm Partnership		
Kirkcudbright Academy Cluster			
Colin Turner	Kirkcudbright Academy		
Dorothy Aitchison	Auchencairn & Borgue Partnership		
	Gatehouse & Twynholm Partnership		
	Kirkcudbright Primary		

West			
Douglas Ewart High School Cluster		Stranraer Academy Cluster	
Colin Turner	Douglas Ewart High School	Colin Turner	Stranraer Academy
Dorothy Aitchison	Creetown & Minnigaff Partnership	Clare Clanachan	Belmont & St Joseph's RC Primary Schools
	Garlieston & Whithorn Partnership		Castle Kennedy & Glenluce Partnership
	Kirkcowan & Wigtown Partnership		Drummore & Sandhead Partnership
	Kirkinner & Port William Partnership		
	Penninghame & St Ninian's RC Schools		Kirkcolm, Leswalt & Portpatrick Partnership
			Park Primary
	Rephad Primary		
	Sheuchan Primary		