

## Teacher Workforce Planning Call for Evidence

Children in Scotland is the collective voice for children, young people and families in Scotland as well as the organisations and businesses that have a significant impact on children's lives throughout the country. It is a membership organisation comprising individuals and organisations from the voluntary, public and private sectors.

We aim to identify and promote the interests of children and their families, influencing the development of policy and services in order to ensure that they are of the best possible quality, capable of meeting the needs of children and young people living in Scotland.

Children in Scotland is pleased to have this opportunity to submit evidence on teacher workforce planning, and we recognise the importance of teacher recruitment and retention in creating a high quality, stable learning environment for children and young people in Scotland. We have based this submission on findings from Enquire, the national advice service for additional support for learning, and evidence obtained from our members.

## Teacher Support

A key factor in the retention of staff is the pressure that teachers experience. As school budgets come under increasing pressure, key support mechanisms for teachers are being lost. This includes the availability of specialist support such as Support for Learning staff, who can help provide tailored support for pupils a range of additional support needs<sup>123</sup>. This reduction in support for classroom teachers exists within a social context of increasing levels of child poverty and increasing numbers of children and young people with the additional support needs<sup>45</sup>.

Enable's *Included in the Main?!* report highlights that the lack of classroom support for teachers is having a negative impact on the outcomes of children

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-05579>

<sup>2</sup> South, H, 2016, *Where have all the support for learning teachers gone?*, [Online] available at < <http://www.cpdbytes.com/where-have-all-the-support-for-learning-teachers-gone/> > [Accessed on 17/4/2017]

<sup>3</sup> SCSC, 2015, *New figures on teacher cuts to have a major impact on pupils with additional support needs*, Available at < <https://www.thescsc.org.uk/new-figures-on-teacher-cuts-set-to-have-a-major-impact-on-pupils-with-additional-support-needs/> > [Accessed on 17/4/17]

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendSpecialEducation>

<sup>5</sup> CPAG 2017, *Child Poverty in Scotland*, Available at < <http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/child-poverty-facts-and-figures> > [Accessed on 17/4/17]

and young people with learning disabilities and on the mental wellbeing of teachers<sup>6</sup>.

The report identifies that just 12% of teaching staff feel they cannot meet the learning needs of pupils with learning disabilities, while 66% feel they don't get enough support to meet the needs of pupils with learning disabilities<sup>7</sup>. The *Included in the Main?!* report highlights that for 62% of teachers this lack of support is causing increased stress<sup>8</sup>.

In addition to this, evidence suggests that schools have witnessed an increasing number of pupils in schools for whom English is an additional language<sup>9</sup>. With less resource now available to support these children and young people, this contributes to the pressures on teaching staff, and potentially worsening outcomes for pupils.

We recommend therefore that support for teacher recruitment and retention must fully consider whether ASL needs are adequately resourced.

## Testing

Children in Scotland agrees that assessment is central to teaching and learning. Children and young people cannot learn and develop without confident and effective assessment by teachers. However, during our consultation exercises to inform our response to the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education, members expressed a number of concerns about a range of potential disbenefits to classroom teachers of introducing new national testing. These included potential pressures on teachers to 'teach to test', worries about a move towards school league tables, and practical issues around administering tests, and ICT resources<sup>10</sup>.

Evidence also indicates that introducing more high stakes testing can contribute to reduced motivation, increased stress levels and what a National Union of Teachers study described as 'unreasonable pressure' on teachers<sup>11</sup>. We would urge the Scottish Government to consider how to mitigate these perceived or actual pressures with the introduction of standardised assessment across Scotland.

## Actions to Tackle Shortages

Children in Scotland suggests that to improve teacher retention and recruitment a wide-reaching approach is required. Certain positive steps can be made to improve the situation within schools, such as a commitment

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<sup>6</sup> Enable, 2016, *Included in the Main?!*, [pdf] < <http://www.enable.org.uk/includedinthemain/Documents/IncludED%20in%20the%20Main%20-%202022%20Steps%20on%20the%20Journey%20to%20Inclusion.pdf> > [Accessed on 26/4/17]

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/Summarystatsforschools>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.childrenscotland.org.uk/consultation/call-for-evidence-on-the-national-improvement-framework-for-scottish-education-november>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.teachers.org.uk/files/exam-factories.pdf>

across Scotland to improving the mechanisms within the learning environment that support teachers in the provision of learning. A cornerstone of this change would be increased investment in support for learning staff.

However, we would suggest that policymaking outside the field of purely school education and workforce planning will be required as the pressures that teachers face are not purely school-based. This must include a much wider and more integrated commitment to addressing social inequalities, such as child poverty, that can have a negative impact on children and young people's ability to learn, and add to teacher concerns and pressures. This must be further bolstered by more funding of early years services and family support to promote learning prior to school and reduce the pressure of dealing with additional support needs that relate to deprivation such as lack of literacy skills.

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