

**ANGUS COUNCIL
ANGUS COUNCIL - 12 APRIL 2016**

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 17TH MAY 2016

SCHOOL AND PUPIL SUPPORT ASSISTANTS (SPSAs)

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Reference is made to report number 140/15 schedule 2 that advised members of the outcome of a review of school LG support staff. This review recommended that Support for Learning Assistants (SFLA), Secondary School Assistants (SSA) and Primary School Assistants (PSA) roles be amalgamated into a single role. The review recognised that there are a number of different support roles within schools, each with staff on different pay grades. The review noted that amalgamating Support for Learning Assistants, Secondary School Assistants and Primary School Assistants into a single role would introduce a greater degree of flexibility, allowing staff to be deployed to where the need is greatest and to be used more effectively with children and young people.
- 1.2 The staff groups within the scope of the review were SFLAs (LG4), SSAs (LG3), PSAs (LG3) and PSA/Clerical Assistants (LG3) in secondary and primary schools. Approximately 240 FTE staff currently undertake these roles.

2. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 2.1 In order to progress the recommendation of the review, a working group comprising representatives from Children and Learning, Human Resources, Finance and union/staff representatives was established. The review group comprised Principal Officer, Additional Support Needs; Secondary Head Teacher; Resourced Primary Head Teacher, Rural Primary Head Teacher, Principal Teacher Additional Support Needs (Secondary); Principal Teacher Additional Support Needs (Double Cluster); representative from Finance; Secondary School Manager, representative from Human Resources and union representatives.
- 2.1 Four focus groups were formed comprising of SFLA, SSA, PSA and PSA/Clerical within double clusters. These groups developed a job outline and specification for a new role that would be called "School and Pupil Support Assistant". It was also recognised that in some schools, particularly smaller rural schools, the person undertaking such a role may also be employed to undertake significant clerical duties on a separate contract.
- 2.3 The new post of School and Pupil Support Assistant has undergone job grading and has been graded at LG4. All staff undertaking the new role will now be required to:
- Work with individual and groups of children and young people to support them with their learning
 - Develop appropriate positive, supportive and nurturing relationships with children and young people
 - Ensure the Health and Well-being of children and young people, including the provision of personal care and the administration of medication.
 - Assist with Resources and Administration
- 2.4 All Primary School Assistants, Secondary School Assistants and Support for Learning Assistants will now be called School and Pupil Support Assistants (SPSAs). They will be issued with a new job description to this effect. They will, as is currently the case, be employed on term time contracts. With appropriate training, staff in the new role will be required to undertake different aspects of the role, thereby introducing a higher degree of

flexibility into the workforce. This flexibility will help support the inclusion of children with additional support needs and better support classroom teachers in their role.

2.5 The benefits of moving to a new single role are:

- Increased flexibility in deploying staff to where the need is within schools and between schools where necessary;
- It will allow for the development of a more highly skilled flexible workforce; for example all staff will be trained in first aid and moving and handling to enable them to provide effective support to individual pupils. A training strategy has been developed that will be implemented over the next 6 months.
- It will provide flexibility in the use of staff to support children and young people and to promote their independent learning skills and is so doing reduce the demands placed on teachers.
- The ability to provide a more flexible and responsive service in supporting learning, health and wellbeing, personal care and the administration of medication;
- The ability to use staff more flexibly to meet the needs of children with complex personal care needs;
- The ability to better cover staff absences;
- The ability to support the social inclusion of children with additional support needs by minimising barriers to learning and providing specific interventions.
- The ability to better support children and young people through transitions, namely transition between early learning and childcare and primary school, between primary and secondary and between secondary and post school destinations, for example staff following individual children and young people as they move settings to ensure continuity of support, including as they move into college; and
- To better support teachers to focus on their primary role as a classroom teacher.

2.6 SFLAs in primary schools are currently graded LG4. There are currently 63.65 budgeted Full Time Equivalent (FTE) SFLAs at a cost of £1,149K. The proposal to move to a new job role will not impact on their current level of remuneration or other terms and conditions.

2.7 PSAs and PSA/Clerical are currently graded as LG3. There are 102.34 FTE at a cost of £1,724K. The proposal would mean these staff being increased from LG3 to LG4 reflecting the fact that they will be asked to undertake a wider range of duties and be responsive to the needs within the school and the wider service.

2.8 SSAs are currently graded at LG3. There are currently 30.51 FTE at a cost of £514K. The proposal would mean these staff being increased from LG3 to LG4 reflecting the fact that they will be asked to undertake a wider range of duties and be responsive to the needs within the school and the wider service.

2.9 SFLAs in secondary schools are currently graded at an LG4. There are currently 43.65FTE at a cost of £790K. The proposal to move to a new job role will not impact on their current level of remuneration or other terms and conditions.

2.10 Given that these changes will impact on the terms and conditions of some existing staff there was a formal 21 day consultation undertaken between 12 February and 4 March 2016. In addition two open events also took place and were attended by over 50 members of staff at each event.

2.11 In light of the new job outline and person specification, a training strategy has been developed in order to ensure that staff are appropriately skilled to carry out the full remit of the new School and Pupil Support Assistants post. Staff will be provided with additional training to undertake aspects of the new role as appropriate to their current work setting.

2.12 The anticipated cost of regrading the current SSAs and PSA is will be £151K. This will be met from the existing revenue budget by reducing the overall number of staff employed and reducing our reliance on the use of sessional staff by approximately 8 FTE. This reduction will be achieved by way of the Council's agreed managing workforce change arrangements although it is likely it will be achieved through natural turnover as staff move post or leave the service.

2.13 The aim is to implement this new role from August 2016.

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