

# Report

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| Report to:       | <b>Education Resources Committee</b>            |
| Date of Meeting: | <b>5 December 2023</b>                          |
| Report by:       | <b>Executive Director (Education Resources)</b> |

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| Subject: | <b>Provision of LGBT+ Inclusive Education in South Lanarkshire Schools</b> |
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ inform members of the detail of the provision of LGBT+ Inclusive Education in South Lanarkshire schools
- ◆ seek support for the next steps proposed to ensure LGBT+ Inclusive Education is embedded across our schools

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) to note the range of activities in place to support the delivery of LGBT+ Inclusive Education across South Lanarkshire schools; and
- (2) to approve and support the action proposed to further embed LGBT+ Inclusive Education across South Lanarkshire schools.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. Education in South Lanarkshire is based on an inclusive ethos that ensures that all learners experience learning environments where diversity is valued, and are treated fairly, have equality of opportunity and experience a sense of belonging. An inclusive approach ensures that pupils and staff respect and appreciate each other's uniqueness, contributing to the development of tolerant and empathetic individuals.
- 3.2. We are committed to the wellbeing of learners, reflecting the aspirations of the Getting it Right for Every Child policy framework, that all children and young people should be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and included and that they have their views listened to and are involved in decisions that affect them.
- 3.3. An inclusive ethos in an education context embodies values of equality, diversity and collaboration. It is through this that individual differences are celebrated, equal opportunities are provided and a sense of cohesive community is established, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of learners.
- 3.4. Equality is the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct. It is also the advancement of equality of opportunity and fostering of good relations to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. Diversity is about recognising and valuing difference, where everyone is respected for who they are.

#### **4. Legislative and Policy Context**

- 4.1. A range of legislation and policy frameworks support the equality and diversity agenda in relation to LGBT+ issues across education contexts. Overall, the current equalities legislation in Scotland addresses the inclusion of LGBT+ individuals in the education system by providing legal protection against discrimination, promoting inclusive policies and procedures and offering guidance for schools to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for all learners.

The overall aim is to create a society that values diversity and respects the rights of every individual.

##### **4.1.1. *Equality Act 2010***

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaces previous separate equality legislation in Britain with a single, harmonised Act. The Act provides a framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of the following protected characteristics:-

- ◆ disability
- ◆ gender reassignment
- ◆ pregnancy and maternity
- ◆ race
- ◆ religion or belief
- ◆ sex
- ◆ sexual orientation
- ◆ age\*
- ◆ marriage and civil partnership\*

\*Age and marriage and civil partnership are not protected characteristics for the schools' provision. However, in general, the Act applies across all the protected characteristics in a consistent way.

The Act also introduces a single Public Sector Equality Duty (the general duty). Within a school setting, this means we have to give 'due regard' to the three elements of the duty in all our activities:-

- ◆ eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ◆ advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- ◆ foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These duties are also reflected in international human rights as expressed in the United Nations Convention on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.

##### **4.1.2. *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014***

The Act establishes wellbeing as the key mode of assessment for practitioners in Scottish schools. Wellbeing is based upon the wellbeing indicators set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

#### 4.1.3. *Equally Safe Strategy*

The Scottish Government introduced the Equally Safe Strategy which aims to tackle gender-based violence including misogyny, violence against women and girls and violence and discrimination faced by LGBT+ individuals. This Strategy emphasises the importance of education, in challenging biases and promoting equality and respect.

#### 4.1.4. *Supporting Transgender Young People: Guidance for Schools in Scotland*

To further support the inclusion of LGBT+ individuals, the Scottish Government has issued guidance for schools on creating safe and inclusive learning environments, 'Supporting Transgender Young People: Guidance for Schools in Scotland'. This provides information on how to support transgender students and creates guidelines for schools to follow when dealing with issues related to gender identity.

### 5. **National Developments in Education**

#### 5.1. In 2018, Scotland became the first country in the world to commit to advancing LGBT+ Inclusive Education in all schools.

5.1.1. In order to support this, the Scottish Government funds a national platform [www.lgbteducation.scot](http://www.lgbteducation.scot) which is managed on its behalf by the Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) charity. The website contains resources, training opportunities and suggestions for whole school approaches towards the action of embedding LGBT+ Inclusive Education. The approach is to support schools in taking a pro-active stance in tackling prejudice-based bullying by including LGBT+ related learning themes in ordinary teaching, in a natural and meaningful way in order to prevent stigma and stereotypical attitudes developing.

5.1.2. This includes resources and training materials designed to support 7 themes across the curriculum:-

- ◆ Understanding the Equality Act (2010), UNCRC and Human Rights
- ◆ Identifying prejudice, discrimination and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia)
- ◆ Recognising and challenging gender stereotypes
- ◆ Diverse families, including LGBT+ parents and siblings
- ◆ Celebrating diversity and difference
- ◆ History of LGBT+ Equality Movements
- ◆ LGBT+ past and present figures and role models

5.1.3. The website also has an implementation and evaluation toolkit covering the three areas of journey, achievement and excellence with an exercise in consulting with parents and carers.

5.1.4. A range of policies, guidance and resources to support establishments to develop their own policies and practices to provide a safe, inclusive environment for all learners can be found on the Education Scotland website [Education Scotland](http://www.education.scot.nhs.uk) and training from specialist, external agencies to support development in this area can also be accessed from LGBT Youth Scotland, Stonewall and *RespectMe*.

5.1.5. The National Parent Forum of Scotland has produced an information leaflet for parents and carers giving an overview of the content and rationale underpinning LGBT+ inclusive education. [LGBT Inclusive Education: Information for Parents and Carers – National Parent Forum of Scotland \(npfs.org.uk\)](http://www.npfs.org.uk) [www.npfs.org.uk](http://www.npfs.org.uk)

## 6. Education Resources: Local Developments

### 6.1. Treat Me Well: Anti-bullying Behaviour Guidance

The Treat Me Well Anti-Bullying [Treat Me Well \(anti-bullying guidelines\) Education and learning - South Lanarkshire Council](#) guidance produced by South Lanarkshire Council Education Resources in conjunction with *Respect Me*, Scotland's national anti-bullying service, is operating within schools across the authority and is firmly embedded in children's rights. The guidance takes full account of the national legislative and policy landscape including equalities legislation and Supporting Transgender Young People (2017).

It has been developed in partnership with staff, parents and carers, children and young people, other agencies and community stakeholders and provides a holistic framework underpinned by effective partnership working, that supports us to fulfil our responsibility to support the health and wellbeing of all children and young people. It encourages the creation of learning environments that are safe, nurturing, respectful and free from fear, abuse and discrimination.

The document outlines the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and for each protected characteristic, details resources, continuous professional learning opportunities and organisations that can support schools in the drive to fully integrate and embed equity, equality and diversity.

### 6.2. Schools

Schools' approaches to celebrating and supporting diversity is demonstrated in their day to day work and their ongoing commitment to delivering the highest quality education experience that is accessible to all. Policies and practices are well grounded in current legislation, national policy and demonstrate a shared understanding of the needs and value of individual children and young people. Schools have a clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics, supporting all learners to maximise their successes and achievements.

#### 6.2.1. *Scottish Government LGBT+ Inclusive Education training*

Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) is Scotland's LGBT+ Inclusive Education charity. Their goal is for all young people to grow up in a society free from homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. They work on behalf of the Scottish Government to deliver continuous professional development opportunities and provide teachers and educators with resources to implement LGBT+ learning themes into routine teaching and learning, to allow LGBT+ young people to feel included in their learning.

Training delivered by TIE on behalf of the Scottish Government, to support school staff in delivering an LGBT+ Inclusive curriculum is offered in two stages.

1. Stage 1 e-learning module is for individual teachers and is composed of five areas:
  - ◆ Introduction to LGBT+ Inclusive Education
  - ◆ The Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty
  - ◆ Including LGBT+ Inclusive Education learning themes across the curriculum
  - ◆ Safeguarding in the classroom and school community
  - ◆ Case studies

This module takes 60 to 90 minutes to complete and aims to promote an improved understanding of the national approach to LGBT+ Inclusive Education in Scotland, a comprehensive introduction to the LGBT+ Inclusive Education learning themes and how to embed them across the curriculum and to promote awareness of the range of resources available to support this element of the curriculum.

2. Stage 2 training is delivered on a face-to-face basis with whole staff teams including senior leadership teams and provides opportunities for staff to work together and develop suitable action plans for their setting in identifying curricular opportunities to embed LGBT+ learning. This input requires a minimum commitment of two hours.

The Scottish Government funds a national platform [www.lgbteducation.scot](http://www.lgbteducation.scot) which is managed on its behalf by the Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) charity. 33 South Lanarkshire schools are registered on the Scottish Government's [www.lgbteducation.scot](http://www.lgbteducation.scot) platform and 183 teachers have completed the Stage 1 e-learning course.

#### 6.2.2. *Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) Showcase Event*

A highly successful LGBT+ Inclusive Education showcase event including workshops, presented by TIE, took place on 8 November 2023 at Council Headquarters, Hamilton.

The session was attended by 100 staff from across Education Resources and covered key information including national expectations, principles for effective practice and a showcase of available resources.

The feedback was very positive with 100% of attendees feeling that their confidence in delivering LGBT+ Inclusive Education had increased and helped them in considering the next steps for their establishments. Comments from participants include:

- ◆ "Giving me the confidence and enthusiasm to take this forward in my school as we have lots of LGBT families. Thank you"
- ◆ "The various blend of approaches and resources which could be used to build an appropriate curriculum. The training and support on offer to schools from TIE is very reassuring"
- ◆ "This was an excellent training session. I'm looking forward to doing the Stage 1 modules and looking at the website and toolkit. Thanks to you all, what a lovely, welcoming and inclusive team you all are"
- ◆ "Well done, a great morning. Really pleased the resources are created by teachers for teachers"

#### 6.2.3. *LGBT Youth Scotland (LGBTYS) Charter Award*

LGBTYS Scotland is Scotland's national charity for LGBT+ young people, working with 13-25 year olds across the country. The organisation delivers the LGBT Charter Programme to schools, organisations and businesses at Gold, Silver or Bronze Level. This enables schools to review their policies, practice and training to ensure their schools are proactively LGBT+ inclusive.

The following SLC secondary schools have achieved the Charter Award:-

Silver Award: Calderglen High School, Cathkin High School, Lesmahagow High School, Duncanrig Secondary School

Bronze Award: Stonelaw High School

Strathaven Academy, Larkhall Academy, Biggar High School and Hamilton Grammar have started the journey towards accreditation.

#### 6.2.4. *Equally Safe at School Programme*

Lesmahagow High has introduced the Equally Safe at School programme. This is a whole school approach to preventing Gender Based Violence and promoting equality which links directly with their LGBT+ work.

These approaches complement each other in promoting tolerance and acceptance.

#### 6.2.5. *National LGBT+ Implementation Group*

A member of staff and two pupils from Duncanrig Secondary School were members of the national LGBT+ Inclusive Education Implementation Group which was formed to facilitate implementation of the 33 recommendations of the LGBT+ Inclusive Education Working Group.

The recommendations were accepted by Scottish Ministers in November 2018. This work led to Scotland becoming the first country in the world to commit to embedding LGBT+ inclusive education in Scotland.

### 6.3. Education Psychological Services

The team in Psychological Services highlighted that they would like to have more information about LGBT+ as part of progressing equality, equity and diversity themes within the Service. As a result, they have engaged LGBT Youth Scotland to provide them with LGBT+ Awareness training. This is individual online training which the whole Service will undertake during November 2023. This will include psychologists, research assistants, trainee psychologists currently on placement and clerical support, approximately 44 people in total.

6.3.1. There will be an evaluation of the training responses by LGBT Youth Scotland, and the Service will use this information as a basis for discussion on next steps during their next Service development day on 23 November 2023. As part of this, they will move forward and undertake the charter award over an approximately 18-month period.

6.3.2. The Service will identify the potential for broader learning within education in the longer term and links with developments in anti-bullying approaches and will work collaboratively with the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service to ensure the broader participation and voice of young people.

### 6.4. Youth, Family and Community Learning Service

#### 6.4.1. *Hamilton*

The weekly Hamilton Universal Connections LGBT+ Community Group is focused on supporting young people within the LGBT+ Community via issue-based workshops, consultation and recreational activities. The group is activity-focused, and young people between the ages of 12 and 18 who identify as LGBT+ are welcome. Provisions so far have included workshops on self-esteem, art and outdoor activities. These activities support young people to develop confidence and build a support system within their community.

#### 6.4.2. *East Kilbride*

East Kilbride LGBT+ group is the 'Sun and Rain' which was the name selected by the participants who attend. The group has been running weekly for almost 2 years and aims to provide a safe space for LGBT+ young people aged 14 –17, exploring LGBT+ issues whilst promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. Activities are youth led

and can include chill spaces, boardgames, arts and crafts and themed or issue-based nights on topics important to the young people attending.

#### 6.4.3. *Lanark*

The Friday Night group meets weekly at Lanark Universal Connections and is an LGBT+ group for young people in the local area. The group is needs led and young people are consulted regularly about the types of activities on offer at the sessions. It is a place for young people to express themselves with their peers in a safe and nurturing environment.

#### 6.4.4. *Rutherglen and Cambuslang*

The group participates in many drop in and recreational activities as well as receiving inputs from partner agencies. They have been involved in examining issues such as mental health and well-being (including mental health first aid), consultation by NHSL on development of a mental health website for young people and participation in a healthy cooking programme with partners at Healthy Valleys). In addition, the group have had inputs from LGBT+ charities such as The Terrence Higgins Trust and input from Police Scotland in relation to hate crime and hate crime prevention.

### 7. **Next Steps**

#### 7.1. Life in Scotland for LGBT+ young people report (LGBYTS)

In February 2023, LGBYTS published their *Life in Scotland for LGBT young people* report, which offers a snapshot of what life is like in Scotland for LGBT+ young people across a range of areas including education, health, rights and experiences of discrimination. The report highlights that less than half of participants (48%) said they feel supported as an LGBT+ young person in education. In addition, 67% of participants reported experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying and 82% of secondary learners reported that they hear anti LGBT+ language and slurs used at school.

#### 7.2. South Lanarkshire Schools Audit (September 2023)

During September 2023, an audit was conducted across Head Teachers in South Lanarkshire schools to ensure a clear baseline was established for furthering our work on progressing LGBT+ issues.

There were 64 respondents and the audit highlighted the following main themes:-

- ◆ 33% of respondents did not feel confident in supporting LGBT+ children and young people
- ◆ 64% of respondents were not aware of the LGBT+ Inclusive Education national platform
- ◆ 32% of respondents have a pupil equality group
- ◆ 24% of respondents have carried/partially carried out an audit of class/library texts to ensure LGBT+ representation
- ◆ There is a need to further develop partnership with parents in promoting understanding of LGBT+ inclusive education approaches.

#### 7.3. Working Group

Following the TIE Showcase event, which took place on 8 November 2023, a working group will be set up with membership from across Education Resources to include representation from schools, the Educational Psychology Service and Youth, Family and Community Learning Service to examine the actions to be taken to further support schools to embed LGBT+ inclusive education in their practice. The working group will consider a broad range of issues arising from the event, including consultation with pupils, parents and carers.

7.3.1. Schools will be asked, as part of their normal improvement cycle, to ensure that parents/carers are kept fully informed about their work in relation to the Equalities agenda and where appropriate, curricular materials will be shared with them.

7.4. Continuous Professional Development

Schools will be asked to place a focus on Equalities during Session 2024/2025 and each school will be asked to set out their plans for doing so as part of their School Improvement Plan. Schools will set this in the context of the UNCRC legislation.

During Session 2024/2025, all teaching staff will be required to undertake the Scottish Government professional learning course Stage 1 e-learning module and this will be included as an element of the annual mandatory training programme. Stage 2 training can be accessed by schools following the completion of Stage 1 and Education Resources will monitor the uptake of this with the aspirational target of all schools completing this training.

7.5. Refresh of Anti-bullying Guidance

Scotland's national anti-bullying organisation, *RespectMe*, continues to deliver sessions to schools on an ongoing basis to support them in refreshing and updating anti-bullying policies.

7.5.1. The national guidance, *Respect for All*, is currently being updated with a launch date of Summer 2024. Following this, the South Lanarkshire Council guidance, *Treat Me Well*, will be updated with the inclusion of clear guidance on supporting LGBT+ young people.

7.6. Recording and Monitoring

Recent analysis of data from the SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities module indicates that only 6 incidents of homophobic bullying were recorded across South Lanarkshire schools during session 2022/2023. This may reflect a degree of under reporting in this area that requires to be further explored.

In response to this, schools have been issued with further guidance regarding the importance of accurate recording within the Bullying and Equalities module and, in particular, the importance of recording prejudice-based bullying. In contrast, 84 incidents were recorded that had their basis in other types of prejudice e.g. race, body image/physical appearance

7.7. Equalities Co-ordinators

A network of Equalities Co-ordinators will be established across all schools to facilitate sharing of information and development of policy and procedures to ensure compliance with legislation and expectations of the national policy framework and promote best practice across all education establishments.

This will build on recent training delivered by *RespectMe*, the national anti-bullying service, and attended by over 100 education staff, which reinforced the importance of recording bullying and using the prejudice based bullying categories to facilitate recording and analysis of bullying incidents.

7.8. Launch of Inclusion Hub Resource

A new Inclusion Hub resource accessible to education staff is now available on GLOW, that allows schools to access resources and continuous professional learning experiences in relation to learners with a range of additional needs. In particular, there is a dedicated space for Equalities, including LGBT+ inclusive education.



## **8. Summary**

- 8.1. Education Resources has a key responsibility for developing successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens and is committed to ensuring that all LGBT+ children and young people feel included, safe and respected.
- 8.2. We will continue to work in partnership with parents/carers and other stakeholders to ensure that all young people are free to learn in a safe and secure environment and promote a positive ethos across our educational establishments that fosters the development of skills, self esteem and resilience within our young people.
- 8.3. Through promotion and provision of continuous professional development opportunities which focus on equity, equality and diversity, we will continue to develop education environments where difference is celebrated and role model how to challenge prejudice and will work to ensure our staff are well-equipped to both make this a proactive part of the curriculum and to ensure any bullying instances are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

## **9. Employee Implications**

- 9.1. There are positive implications for professional development for teaching staff in undertaking the Scottish Government Inclusive Education Stage 1 e-learning module.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. None

## **11. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 11.1. There are no significant implications for climate change, sustainability and the environment arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **12. Other Implications**

- 12.1. There are no implications for risk in terms of the information contained in this report.

## **13. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 13.1. As schools develop Equalities policies, the need for an impact assessment may be considered.
- 13.2. Engagement with children, young people and school communities is a fundamental component of the development of Equalities policies.

**Carole McKenzie**

**Executive Director (Education Resources Resources)**

14 November 2023

## **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

- Education and learning: inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

## **Previous References**

None

**List of Background Papers**

None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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