

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	3 March 2020
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources) Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Counselling through Schools – Update Report
----------	--

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide an update on the delivery of counselling through primary, secondary and special schools
- ◆ inform members of the guidance developed for schools: 'South Lanarkshire Framework for the delivery of Counselling through Schools'
- ◆ seek approval to establish a post of Quality Improvement Officer to manage and co-ordinate the delivery of the counselling through schools service

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that progress on the provision of counselling through primary, secondary and special schools be noted;
- (2) that the content of the guidance document 'South Lanarkshire Framework for the delivery of Counselling through Schools' be noted; and
- (3) that the establishment of a post of Quality Improvement Officer is approved to support co-ordination and delivery of the counselling through schools service.

3. Background

- 3.1. In June 2018, the Children and Young People's Mental Health Task Force was jointly commissioned by the Scottish Government and COSLA and tasked with investigating how to improve the way in which children's mental health services were organised. The Taskforce published a series of recommendations in July 2019, highlighting that a whole systems approach, underpinned by Getting it right for every child, would help children, young people and families get the right help at the right time.
- 3.2. Following on from these recommendations and as part of its Mental Health Strategy, the Scottish Government has made available funding for the provision of access to counsellors through schools to be delivered to pupils aged 10 and over from 2019/2020.

3.3. The agreed principles underpinning the delivery of the counselling through schools service developed by the Scottish Government are:-

1. the commitment that the service should be delivered in partnership between national and local government, and relevant partners, and should build upon the services already in place wherever possible
2. that the provision of counselling should be part of a holistic, child centred approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
3. that counselling services should be delivered within the COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) definition of counselling by qualified counsellors registered with an appropriate body
4. that services should be available to secondary pupils primarily, with access for children over the age of 10 in primary and special schools and in communities
5. that there should be availability of counselling services during school holidays, to ensure continued support to children and young people
6. that services should ensure a robust assessment is carried out and that young people are supported to access alternative services where counselling may not be appropriate
7. that the provision of counselling through schools should align to, and/or enhance the local services to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
8. that services should be accessible, utilising technology, virtual approaches and delivery in non-educational settings where communities need it, particularly in rural communities
9. that local policies and procedures in relation to child protection and information sharing should be followed. The requirements of the registering body in terms of professional conduct and supervision should also be followed
10. the recognition that counselling is not appropriate or helpful for all young people, and that particularly where a young person's home or circumstances are out-with their control, there may be other supports required. Counselling may, or may not, form part of that support but is dependent on a wider child centred approach and assessment and staged intervention in line with GIRFEC principles

4. A Continuum of Support

- 4.1. Counselling is only one of a range of supports which may be available within school to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing needs. The range of support may include regular time with a trusted adult, coaching, access to a mentor, group work, peer support, involvement with Psychological Services, and/or access to School Nursing or local community based support.
- 4.2. Reference is made to what can be described as a tiered model of intervention to support a young person which takes account of their perspective. The Mental Health Governance Group supports the principle of individual support and the prioritisation of this based on the needs of the young person. This includes the views of the young person, schools, and where appropriate, education psychological services, child and adolescent mental health services, NHS Lanarkshire Health Promotion, the voluntary sector, NHS Lanarkshire Adult Psychology Service and the Education Resources Youth, Family and Community Learning Service. NHS Lanarkshire currently deliver one to one therapeutic counselling services to young people of secondary age, through the Lanarkshire Youth Counselling Service.

- 4.3. Where counselling is agreed as an individual support, referrals should be prioritised through appropriate school level planning groups, in order that there is an overview of who is accessing counselling, for what purpose and over what timescale.

5. Implementation – update on progress

- 5.1. During November to December 2019, the *South Lanarkshire Framework for the delivery of Counselling through Schools* draft document was developed and consultation took place with a range of individuals and groups including the Counselling through Schools Reference Group. The document provides guidance to schools on all aspects of delivery of the counselling through schools service including key practice issues, quality assurance and financial management.
- 5.2. Since October 2019, Finance and Corporate Resources has progressed work to include this service area in the Procured Service Arrangement Sourcing Strategy for Educational Services. The impact of this will be improved procurement arrangements, quality delivery of services and improved compliance in procured spend.
- 5.3. A detailed audit of all counselling services currently delivered across all schools was completed in January 2020.
- 5.4. A presentation on the detail and implementation of the counselling through schools programme was delivered to all Head Teachers and extended central education staff at the Inclusion Conference on 16 January 2020. The *South Lanarkshire Framework for the delivery of Counselling through Schools* document was distributed and colleagues were given the opportunity to review and feedback via the Learning Community meetings which took place during January and February 2020. Copies of the document have been made available in the Members' Areas.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. It is recognised that there are staffing implications for implementing and co-ordinating the counselling through schools programme and they are as follows:-

Post	Proposed number of posts	Grade	SCP range	Annual salary	Gross cost (inc. On costs 28.3%)
Quality Improvement Officer (QIO)	1	Quality Improvement Officer SNCT	Pt 1-3	£59,580 - £66,780	£76,441 - £85,678

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. South Lanarkshire Council has been allocated £0.709m this financial year and £0.961m for each of the following three financial years from 2020/2021 to 2022/2023 to support the delivery of this initiative as part of the Scottish Government allocation announced in September 2019. Funding will be baselined into the Local Government Settlement thereafter.
- 7.2. The QIO post will be funded from the allocation each year and the remaining funding will be allocated to whole school initiatives and schools; to support the *Framework for the delivery of Counselling through Schools* as part of programme delivery.

7.3. Services will be procured within the recently developed 'Procured Service Arrangement for Educational Services Framework' with an associated scheme of delegation for contract approval and in line with the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

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

9. Other Implications

9.1. There is a risk that the required number of appropriately qualified counsellors cannot be secured. Actions taken to mitigate against this risk include:-

- ◆ proposed appointment of a Quality Improvement Officer post to co-ordinate and support implementation of the counselling programme, including recruitment of appropriately trained staff
- ◆ implementation of formal sourcing strategy (Procured Service Arrangement) offering security for service providers
- ◆ arrangements established for Direct Awards to current providers who meet the criteria
- ◆ exploration of alternative modes of counselling intervention

9.2. Whilst the above points in para 9.1 are designed to mitigate against identified risk factors steps will also be taken through the Quality Improvement Officer post to evaluate the impact of the counselling service in schools and the impact on young people.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

10.1. This report does not require an equality impact assessment.

10.2. Consultation is ongoing with a range of stakeholders, including senior school staff, children and young people, Parent Councils, single and multi-agency partners.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

6 February 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning

Previous References

- Education Resources Committee 1 October 2019

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

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

Anne Donaldson, Head of Education (Inclusion)

Ext: 4452 (Tel: 01698 454452)

E-mail: anne.donaldson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk