

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	8 February 2022
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources) Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Continuation and Development of the Current MCR Pathways Programme
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise of the continuation and development of the current MCR Pathways programme

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the 6 FTE MCR Pathways Co-ordinators posts be made permanent, as detailed in para 8.1 and;
- (2) that 3 MCR Pathways Co-ordinators posts be added to the establishment, fixed term, for 18 months as detailed in paragraph 8.2.

3. Background

3.1. South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) has had a partnership agreement with MCR Pathways since the summer of 2018. MCR Pathways were commissioned to deliver their mentoring programme with South Lanarkshire Council Education Resources and would be based in 6 schools for the first phase of the programme. To support the programme, Education Resources employed 6 Pathways Co-ordinators who would deliver the MCR Pathways programme, which consists of both a mentoring programme for Senior Phase pupils and a group work programme offering a learning experience to young people in S1/S2.

3.2. The current agreement was due to finish at the end of December 2021.

4. Progress to date

4.1. The programme was launched on 25 March 2019 and 6 schools from the authority were chosen to participate, based on the number of care-experienced young people attending and enrolled at these schools, namely, Calderside Academy, Cathkin High School, Hamilton Grammar, Stonelaw High School, St John Ogilvie High School and Trinity High School.

4.2. During phase 2, session 2020/2021 it was anticipated that an additional 3 schools would be offered the opportunity to participate: Larkhall Academy, Lanark Grammar School and Holy Cross High School. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and Scottish

Government restrictions, it was not possible to take this forward with these schools during 2020/21.

4.3. In October 2021, with the easing of restrictions, the 3 schools were invited to participate in the programme to support more young people. Education Resources and MCR Pathways representatives met with the Head Teachers of each school in November 2021.

4.4. There is a requirement for 3 additional Pathways Co-ordinators, for a fixed term of 18 months, for the 3 new schools to start in April 2022 until October 2023.

5. Current position in South Lanarkshire Council

5.1. The MCR Pathways Impact Report February 2021 is attached as appendix 2. This gives a full overview of the current situation of the programme highlighting the impact, benefits, successes, and value of the programme through statistical data, and case studies.

6. Monitoring, future report and update

6.1. Programme monitoring will continue to gather data and feedback which will inform the further planning of mentoring programmes in South Lanarkshire schools and provide the evidence base for future reports on progress.

7. Next Steps

The following steps will be taken forward:-

7.1. Review and update the partnership agreement and data-sharing agreement with MCR Pathways.

7.2. Sign agreement with MCR to transfer all 9 schools (including the 3 new schools) on to the Scottish Government funded programme.

7.3. Ensure payment for the Pathways Co-ordinators will be available for each school through the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.

8. Employee Implications

8.1. The following post should be added to the Education Resources establishment on a permanent basis:

Post title	Number of posts	Grade / SCP	Hourly Rate	Annual salary (excluding on-costs)	Gross salary (including on-costs 30.3%)	Total
MCR Pathways Co-ordinator	6	Grade 2 Level 4 /55 - 57	£16.35 - £16.85	£29,837 - £30,749	£38,877 - £40,066	£233,262 - £240,396

- 8.2. The following posts should be added to the Education Resources establishment for a fixed term of 18 months.

Post title	Number of posts	Grade / SCP	Hourly Rate	Annual salary (excluding on-costs)	Gross salary (including on-costs 30.3%)	Total
MCR Pathways Co-ordinator	3	Grade 2 Level 4 /55 - 57	£16.35 - £16.85	£29,837 - £30,749	£38,877 - £40,066	£116,631 - £120,198

- 8.3. Education Resources personnel provide ongoing training and support for the Pathways Co-ordinators on a frequent basis and support the schools through regular meetings.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The cost per year for 1 FTE MCR Pathways Co-ordinator is £40,066 (this includes on costs). For the 9 schools, the total cost per year for MCR Pathways Co-ordinators is £360,594.
- 9.2. The refresh of the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding was announced in November 2021. The total cost for MCR Pathways Co-ordinators will be met from central Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.
- 9.3. MCR Pathways administrative costs of £28,000 per school (mentor recruitment, training and tracking systems) will be funded by the Scottish Government (announcement made in March 2021). This will be available to the existing 6 schools and the proposed 3 new schools. There will also be training provided by MCR Pathways for current and new Pathways Co-ordinators.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 10.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1. There are no significant risk implications in terms of the information contained within this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 12.2. Engagement has taken place with finance and personnel, headteachers and the MCR Programme on the proposals within this report.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

12 January 2022

Link(s) to Council Objectives/ Ambitions/Values

- Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults.
- Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all.
- Support communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration.
- Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning.
- Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational.
- Encourage participation in physical and cultural activities.

Previous References

- ◆ Education Resources Committee (7 May 2019)

List of Background Papers

- ◆ MCR Pathways Programme

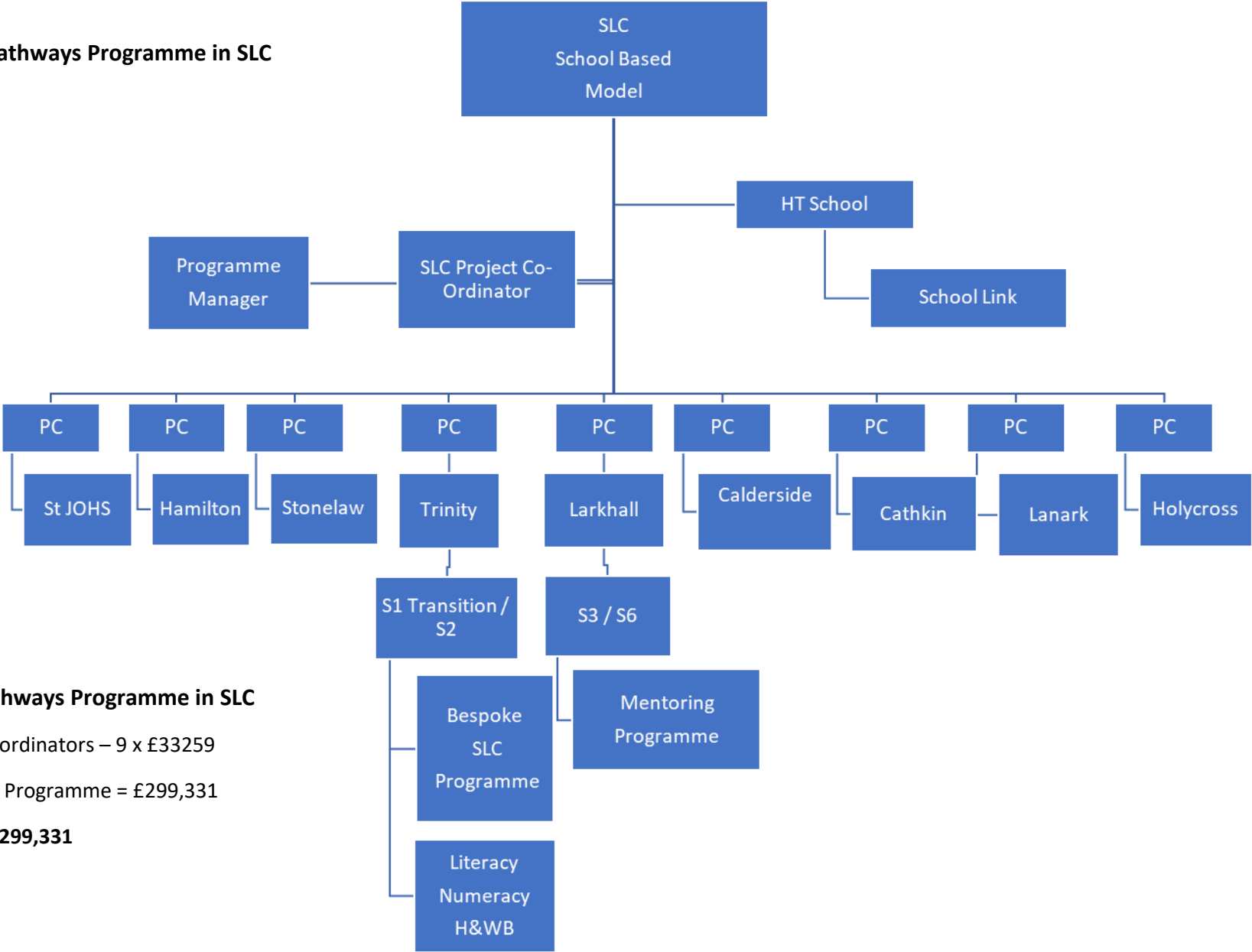
Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:
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Appendix 1 – MCR Pathways Programme in SLC



Appendix 1– MCR Pathways Programme in SLC

9 x MCR Pathways Co-ordinators – 9 x £33259

Projected Total Cost of Programme = £299,331

Total Staffing Costs - £299,331



MCR Pathways

South Lanarkshire

Impact Report February 2021



South Lanarkshire programme context

MCR Pathways supports 346 care-experienced and disadvantaged young people between S1-S6 in South Lanarkshire. The Young South Lanarkshire Talent programme launched in January 2019 and currently operates in six schools: Cathkin High, Stonelaw High, Trinity High, Calderside Academy, Hamilton Grammar and St John Ogilvie.

In S1 and S2, young people participate in weekly Group Work sessions facilitated by their Pathways Coordinator focusing on emotional literacy, wellbeing, teamwork, employability skills and self-awareness. From S3, young people are carefully matched with a mentor who meets with them for a period every week, for a minimum duration of one academic year (in fact, most of our mentored relationships last for three years).

Key Performance Indicators

	Lit. & Num. at Nat. 4+	5+ qualifications at Nat. 4+	1+ qualifications at level 5+	3+ qualifications at level 5 +	S4>S5 staying on rate	Destinations
Care-exp. MCR mentored	100%	100%	100%	75%	87.5%	75.00%
Care-exp. non-mentored	78.57%	78.60%	85.70%	64.30%	42.86%	68.00%
LA care-exp.	64.29%	59.52%	62%	45.24%	42.00%	57.14%
National care- exp.	63.45%	53.12%	57.20%	39.54%	N/A	65.97%
National universal	92.36%	89.80%	92.03%	83.61%	83.22% (LA Universal)	88.44%

On **all four academic measures**, MCR-mentored young people in South Lanarkshire performed significantly better than their non-mentored care-experienced peers, and the national and local authority care-experienced figures.

Comparing MCR-mentored young people with their care-experienced peers within the local authority, the greatest differences were achievement of five or more qualifications at Nat. 4 or above (40.48%) and one or more qualifications at Nat. 5 or above (38%).

Similarly, when we compare MCR-mentored young people with their care-experienced peers nationally, the greatest differences were achievement of five or more qualifications at Nat. 4 or above (46.88%) and one or more qualifications at Nat. 5 or above (42.8%).

MCR-mentored young people had a higher staying-on rate (87.5%) compared with the LA care experienced (42%) and LA universal (83.22%). Positive destinations (which MCR counts as college, university, or employment only) are 75%, above the LA and national care-experienced figures (57.14% and 65.97% respectively). Covid-19 resulted in an unprecedented year, and many college courses having capacity far outstripped by demand. One of our young people did not get on to his chosen course of joinery at college due to this reason. The team is working to strengthen relationships and partnerships with local FE providers to mitigate against this going forward.

Young People support during lockdown

During the two periods of national lockdown, we have continued to provide mentoring (and in some schools Group Work) through virtual platforms. Pathways Coordinators have a scheduled programme of regular contact with young people on the programme (through video call, email, text, or phone call; dependent on young person choice) to check-in and provide wellbeing support where needed.

The table below shows the interactions between young people and Pathways Coordinators over comparable 6-week periods in each of the two national lockdowns.

	1 st lockdown 20/04/20-25/05/20	2 nd lockdown 11/01/21-15/02/21
Young people in pipeline*	50 Total interactions 56.52% cohort participation	107 Total interactions 72.72% cohort participation
Young people meeting with mentors	297 Total interactions 89.19% cohort participation	227 Total interactions 82.05% cohort participation
Total	347 Total interactions 72.86% cohort participation	334 Total interactions 77.39% cohort participation

*those on the programme, in the process of being matched with a mentor

As shown above, despite the challenges of young people not being in school, Pathways Coordinators have successfully maintained frequent and regular contact with the young people supported by MCR. There was a significant increase in the total interactions (+57) and the percentage of the cohort that participated (+16.2%) for young people on the YST programme but not yet matched with a mentor.

The percentage of the MCR cohort that participated in contact with their Pathways Coordinator also increased by nearly 5% between the two lockdown periods. The large majority of those young people not contacted by their Pathways Coordinator are those whom, for a range of individual reasons, it has been agreed that school staff will contact.

Get Online Programme

Wave	Laptops & Wifi	Wifi Only	Laptops Only	Totals
Wave 1 (June)	13	1	0	14
Waves 2 + 3 (July/August)	9	0	4	13
Wave 4 (September)	9	0	6	15
Total Young People Supported				42

From the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, it became evident that young people were struggling to access their schoolwork and were unable to interact with their mentors due to a lack of ICT equipment. Our Pathways Coordinators, working with their pastoral care and pupil support colleagues, identified the urgent needs within their schools. Over 4 “waves” in June, July, August, and September 42 young people across South Lanarkshire were supported with Google Chromebooks, portable WiFi with unlimited data or a combination thereof.

“My mentor is really easy to talk to, he doesn’t speak to me like an adult speaking to a child, it’s like I’m equal to him. I enjoy coming to see him and he has made me look at things differently, I am thinking more about what I want to do and my future because he told me about where he came from and he was just like me and he still made something of himself.”

Young Person, St John Ogilvie High School

Programme development

MCR has continued to invest significantly in programme development this year. Frequent and regular young people, mentor and Pathways Coordinator insight and feedback, combined with professional expertise from a range of specialisms enables us to review and further improve the YST programme through a holistic approach. Key developments are as follows:

New Group Work programme for S1 and S2 young people. The new programme is designed to:

- Increase motivation, commitment, and resilience
- Build self-belief and self-esteem
- Support young people to find, grow and use their talents
- Develop oracy skills, thereby:
 - Increasing confidence by empowering young people to believe that their voice has value, and with the ability to articulate thinking
 - Fostering wellbeing through building successful relationships, talking through issues, expressing feelings, and resolving conflicts
 - Improving academic outcomes by developing critical thinking, reasoning skills and vocabulary to express knowledge and understanding
- Grow and extend empathetic and emotional literacy skills
- Increase understanding and develop strategies to maintain personal wellbeing and a balanced lifestyle
- Establish and foster positive relationships with peers, their Pathways Coordinator, and the regional and national network of YST young people.

Each year is structured into three termly themes, further subdivided into shorter topics. Each topic contains roughly one Challenge that usually requires young people to work in pairs or small teams to complete a practical project with a clear purpose. Development of Oracy skills, based on the

Oracy framework from the University of Cambridge and School 21, are woven throughout every session. Group Work is sequential and progressive, building on prior learning and increasing in level of challenge each term and between S1 and S2.



New Mentor Matching System launched. We have reviewed and improved our mentor matching system, with young people and mentors taking a quiz (supported by their Pathways Coordinator and Mentor Services) that is run through an automated system on a weekly basis. The system compares all young people ready to match with prospective mentors and generates suggestions. Pathways Coordinators then review these suggestions and take their preferred mentor match to the weekly Matching Panel meeting. South Lanarkshire was the first local authority to benefit from the new Matching System in our national roll out.

New appraisal process for Pathways Coordinators. We have launched a new appraisal process linked to the Pathway Coordinator 3-part remit and regional plan priorities. The appraisal process is based on professional discussion, where continuing professional development is agreed, and strategies for overcoming potential barriers to success are discussed. We have also created materials to support reflection on the delivery of Group Work sessions. In South Lanarkshire, a blended approach to appraisal (using elements from MCR interwoven with SLC's Employee Performance Appraisal Form) will be introduced in April 2021.

Pathway Coordinator website. The new site, specifically for Pathways Coordinators, contains all programme materials, guidance, handbooks, and resources. There is an area to share ideas and innovation, and a separate section to upload young person challenges that S1 & S2 students complete as part of the Group Work programme. The site is very accessible and easy to use.

Young Person Regional Advisory Boards. Further extending our focus on ensuring young person voice is at the heart of programme development, aligning very much with a central theme of **The Promise**, we are introducing regional Young Person Advisory Boards. The boards will be comprised of MCR young people (S4 to S6) from across South Lanarkshire's schools. They will play important roles in regional events, programme evaluation and development, as well as benefiting from the opportunity to develop leadership skills and qualifications through facilitated project work.

Regional planning approach

The number of local authorities working with MCR has continued to grow despite the COVID-pandemic. MCR is currently working with 75 schools, with more soon to come on board. We are

a national programme but believe working through a regional approach is the most effective way to support and positively impact young people and all other stakeholders.

Working with senior MCR staff and building on blueprint plans based on 3 stages of programme maturity, each Programme Manager has developed a regional plan based on three core objectives: Mentor recruitment, retention, and engagement; Young Person achievement (academic & wellbeing); and Continuous improvement. Managers from Mentor Services, Digital Systems and Marketing have key areas of responsibility within each regional plan.

Voices from South Lanarkshire schools

Case Study 1

M*, a 4th year pupil from Hamilton Grammar School, is a young carer for his mother - something which affects his ability to focus on school. M is a very quiet boy and when he was first introduced to the Young Scottish Talent programme, he lacked confidence and aspirations for the future. M was matched with mentor Duncan last February to help him focus and find his way.

Since the pair have been meeting, there has been an incredible improvement in M's confidence. He is now comfortable sharing aspects of his home life with Duncan, a topic which he previously struggled with. M and Duncan have developed a strong friendship and it is clear that M is now a lot more relaxed and talkative. His confidence has grown, and others are beginning to notice his fantastic personality coming through. In addition to this, M seems to be coping better with his caring role at home. Throughout the lockdowns of the last year, the pair continue to meet virtually, and Duncan is now helping his mentee to think about his next steps for the future.



When B* at St John Ogilvie High School, was struggling with chemistry he mentioned this to his mentor and she experienced similar struggles at school. The mentor decided to look for ideas to help and bought her mentee a book to help explain things. B was so delighted with the gesture that he visited the Pathways Coordinator right after the meeting to share his excitement. B's mentor and kindness are high valued elements on his own periodic table!

Case Study 2

After moving from her mum's care in England to stay with her dad in Scotland, D*, from Calderside Academy, didn't make a very positive start in her new school showing disruptive behaviour and often coming in late. Although D had a tough exterior, she was clearly struggling and was open to hearing about the Young Scottish Talent programme. After developing a strong relationship with her Pathways Coordinator, the pair agreed that mentoring was a positive next step.

D was matched with Zara, who was young, approachable, and relatable. The two hit it off right away and developed a strong bond. Zara was always non-judgemental and patient but would set goals for D, such as tackling her lateness. When it came to thinking about her future, D was determined to be a beauty therapist, so Zara supported her and helped with course applications. D was delighted to be accepted for her dream course and left Calderside feeling confident and ready for her next steps.

"Building that relationship. Having something completely different from what I've been used to in my own personal working life, and just getting that sense of accomplishment. Knowing that you're helping somebody, even just for 50 minutes a week. Angel and I were constantly running over, it was never just 50 minutes! Just knowing that you were coming to see that person and knowing that you were there for them is a huge, proud achievement for me as an individual."

Julia, Mentor, Cathkin High School



[Watch our short film of Julia and Angel from Cathkin High](#)



Case Study 3

At Stonelaw High, D* was a very quiet and withdrawn student. She had a lot of challenges going on in her personal life and was struggling to engage in school. D's confidence was low, and this affected her attendance. Even when she was attending, her engagement was poor, often skipping classes, but the school's Pathways Coordinator found D to be a bright, bubbly, kind girl and a real character.

D was matched with mentor David, who had a great sense of humour, a really positive outlook on life and who works as a General Manager for a large hotel in Glasgow. As D wanted to work in the hospitality sector, this was a perfect match. David helped build his mentee's confidence, encouraged her to apply for college and has helped her believe in herself. He reinforced the importance in her doing well in her prelims and helped her prep for her college interview.

D is also keen to have some practical work experience in the hotel that David manages, and this is something everyone is working towards organising when the restrictions have been lifted. The support D has received from David has been vital in growing her confidence and aspirations.

Tracy McGlinchey

MCR South Lanarkshire Programme Manager (9 March 2021)