

School Leaving Date Exceptional Circumstances

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights the COVID-19 related disruption to post school transition planning for our most vulnerable young people with complex needs or disability, with resulting parental concern leading to requests for an additional year at secondary school.
- 1.2 The current policy document *School leaving dates, deferred entry and retain at stage* (attached) details that:
- ‘Only in exceptional circumstances can a young person return to school for a 7th year or seek to access courses in our secondary schools as adult learners. In all cases, this will require Heads of Education approval.’
- 1.3 Transition planning takes place within the context of the multiagency guidance *Post School Transition: Getting it right for children and young people with a disability* (attached).
- 1.4 To date, through agreement at the Education Management Team, it had been established that the circumstances of the pandemic should not be considered an ‘exceptional circumstance’ within the context of this policy as this impacts on all young people leaving school. This is in line with current national guidance and practice.
- 1.5 The Community Services Committee is asked to note the impact that two national lockdowns have had on supports and services for our most vulnerable young people with complex needs and/or disabilities, and to agree that the consequences of the pandemic constitute exceptional circumstances, and as such, that a further year at secondary school may be permitted subject to careful consideration of individual circumstances.

This variation would apply for those young people with a complex need or disability who are in 6th year in academic session 2020 – 21 only.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Argyll and Bute Council Education Service and Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership are committed to improving outcomes for young people with disabilities who are experiencing the exciting but also potentially anxious transition from full time enrolment in school and support from Children's Services, into the adult world with possible support from Adult Services.
- 2.2 Careful consideration has been given to the needs of young people with a disability as they move on from school, with Argyll and Bute's multiagency procedure reviewed in September 2018 following close collaboration with the Association for Real Change (ARC Scotland). The full guidance document is attached.
- 2.3 Transition planning is in line with the requirements of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2014 and sits within the well-established Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) practice model.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Services Committee is asked to:

Note the impact that two national lockdowns have had on supports and services for our most vulnerable young people with complex needs and/or disabilities;

Agree that the consequences of the pandemic constitute exceptional circumstances, and as such, that a further year at secondary school may be permitted for those

- 4.6 An analysis of need across Argyll and Bute has identified that approximately 20 young people with complex needs or disability may be particularly disadvantaged as a result of the impact of the pandemic.
- 4.7 Careful analysis of young people with complex needs and disability currently in their 6th year of secondary education has identified that there are eleven young people who may benefit from an additional year at school as a result of the

Oban, Lorn and the Isles			
Oban High School	4	65 hours	total number including S7 pupils = 20 Teaching staff 3.6FTE ASN assistant staffing for class with S7 pupils = $((10/2.5) \times 25) + 25 = 125$ hours ASN assistant staffing for class without S7 pupils = $((6/2.5) \times 25) + 25 = 85$ hours in addition 1 child gets 2:1 support (+25 ASN assistant hours)
Tiree High school	0	nil	
Tobermory High	0	nil	
Total pupils	11		
TOTAL additional staffing		140 hours additional ASN assistant	£85,540 for the full year

4.9 To ensure that our most vulnerable young people with complex needs or disability are not further disadvantaged it is recommended that, where robust multiagency assessment of need and careful analysis of the transition plan identifies that an additional year at secondary school would be in the young person's best interest, that this is granted on the basis of 'exceptional circumstance' arising from the pandemic. This variation would apply for those young people with a complex need or disability who are in 6th year in academic session 2020 – 21 only.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The COVID-19 global pandemic will have implications for many children and young people's wellbeing and achievement. To ensure equity, careful consideration requires to be given to our most vulnerable children and young people. For those with complex needs and a disability making the transition from school to their adult lives is already a very challenging and anxious time for them and their families. It is important that across services steps are taken to reduce the chance of young people being disadvantaged further. It is therefore asked that the recommendation at 4.8 above is considered and agreed.

5.2 It is possible that any relaxation in current national and local practice of

6.4 HR – ensuring adequate staffing

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