

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00975 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Children's Services Education	Lead Officer Name:	Paul Wilcox
		Team:	ASN Team
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Proposal:	Cease Interrupted Learners Service (ILS) as part of ASLOT (Additional Support for Learning Outreach Service)	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):	
24/01/2025	This proposal is to change the way we support children who cannot attend mainstream education due to anxiety, mental health & wellbeing, and factors arising from social communication barriers. The ILS also supports children who have had significant absence or disruption from/to education due to ill health. ILS currently supports 47 learners for 1 to 5 hours per young person per week, in a mix of 1:1 and small group activities.
24/01/2025	The ILS would cease as a service and mainstream schools would be required to provide the outreach support for children currently attending the ILS.
24/01/2025	Savings will be realized from August 2025 to March 2026 and full year savings from April 2026 to March 2027.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	24/25 - £178,289 Breakdown: (Rent of the Cottage - £5799) (Staff costs - £172,490) The service costs £4,107 per pupil for the full school session. A pilot Mental Health & Wellbeing Reconnect Package costs approx. £1,258 per young person based on supporting back to school over an 8 week period.	
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	The full £178,289 would be the full reduction in this budget.	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	01/08/2025	
	End Date (if any):	31/03/2027	

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE

Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence

This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

Total number of pupils accessing the ILS in each of the last five years (broken down by school, sex, SIMD and FME)**20/21**

Larbert: 5

Denny: 3

Braes: 1

Graeme: 3

Bo'ness: 4

Grangemouth: 1

Falkirk: 3

St Mungo's: 0

Total: 20

Of the 20 pupils, 8 are male and 12 are female.

21/22

Larbert: 3

Denny: 7

Braes: 1

Graeme: 1

Bo'ness: 2

Grangemouth: 2

Falkirk: 9

St Mungo's: 2

Total: 27

Of the 27 pupils, 11 are male and 15 are female. 9 are entitled to FSM

22/23

Larbert: 9

Denny: 6

Braes: 3

Graeme: 2

Bo'ness: 6

Grangemouth: 2

Falkirk: 5

St Mungo's: 2

Total: 35

Of the 35 pupils, 12 are male and 20 are female, 3 are 'other'.

23/24

Larbert: 8

Denny: 7

Braes: 3

Graeme: 2

Bo'ness: 5

Grangemouth: 2

Falkirk: 4

St Mungo's: 1

Total: 32

Of the 32 pupils, 12 are male and 17 are female, 3 are 'other.

24/25

Larbert: 9

Denny: 10

Braes: 3

Graeme: 6

Bo'ness: 3

Grangemouth: 3

Falkirk: 8

St Mungo's: 5

Total: 47

Of the 47 pupils, 9 are male and 33 are female, 5 are 'other'. 14 of the pupils are in Quintiles 1-3, 12 of the pupils are in Quintiles 4-6 and 8 pupils are in Quintiles 7-10 of SIMD. 22 of the pupils are entitled to FSM.

B - Qualitative Evidence

This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

The ILS criteria is: "a young person who has been out of education for a prolonged period of time due to either physical or mental health reasons"

Pupils initially start with a 1:1 session to allow them to build a strong and meaningful relationship with their key staff member. After this, there is an increase in the

number of sessions a young person is attending, if capacity allows. The young person may also be offered a number of group sessions including outdoor education, pre-college group, enterprise group, gardening group or our John Muir award. Support in the FVC ACES programme by SFLA.

One pupil has an ILS place and a Vibe (Mental Health and Well being) placement at Donaldson's Independent Special School at a cost of £8000.

One ILS pupil had a privately funded Vibe placement but parent has removed him from this for more beneficial ILS sessions.

Award:

Jenny McNeill, ASN Adviser: Scottish Children's Health Award – Winner of Improving Life Experiences. Jenny was nominated for this award by an ILS parent in 2024.

Children's Commissioner:

Nicola Killean, Children's Commissioner for Scotland, is looking at best practise for young people who are accessing different forms of education or on part time timetables. They are preparing a report about the experiences of young people and how practise can be improved and are liaising with ILS.

2 Local Authorities have visited to see best practice at ILS.

Parental Quotes 24/25

"Thank you for all the support you have given C. We have seen her confidence grow and see how much happier she is since joining The Cottage"

"Thank you for being there for L through everything she's been through. Thank you for supporting L and making sure she leaves school with some qualifications.

And finally, thanks for getting her on to the ACE Course and into College. I can't thank you all enough for your commitment to my daughter."

"You will never know what you all have meant to L and our family".

"It does his mental health good, he really enjoys the Cottage"

"That's amazing, thank you for helping her Tracey, she's done amazing since being with you."

"The only time we see her smile is when she is coming to The Cottage."

Previous Parental and Pupil Feedback

Provided as appendix 1.

Pupil Quotes:

"The Cottage showed me I am good enough"

“They made me who I am today”

“The Cottage gave me confidence”

“I got the opportunity to go to college”

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	No
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	Yes
If NO, please state why.	

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	No	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.		
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.	Budget proposal under consideration by Members. Alternative mitigation has been identified.	
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	No	
Survey	No	
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify		
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	Yes / No	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes / No	
Is further engagement recommended?	Yes	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age			✓	All of the children supported by the service are of High School age. They way they are effectively supported to participate and engage in education and proceed to a positive destination will become the full responsibility of their mainstream school.
Disability			✓	<p>Children with a diagnosed social communication disability who are unable to attend a mainstream ASC and require the smaller setting of the Cottage will be disadvantaged by the removal of this service as they won't be able to access mainstream campus education and will require bespoke outreach support provided by their mainstream school. (See risk below).</p> <p>Currently the ILS have an SFLA supporting a bespoke ILS ACE programme at Forth Valley College which advances equality of opportunity for these learners in Fourth Year of school. This is a programme negotiated between the ILS and FVC. Pastoral DHTS will require to pool their resources and collaborate with FVC to negotiate continuity of a bespoke ACE programme for these learners in Fourth Year.</p>
Sex			✓	Females tend to use the service more than males. Therefore, should the service cease, this will have a disproportionate impact on female pupils.
Ethnicity	✓			We do not have data to measure the impact on this group.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief	✓			We do not have data to measure the impact on this group.
Sexual Orientation	✓			We do not have data to measure the impact on this group.
Transgender	✓			We do not have data to measure the impact on this group.
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓			We do not have data to measure the impact on this group.
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			We do not have data to measure the impact on this group.
Poverty	✓			There are no specific positive or negative impacts from this proposal based on poverty.
Care Experienced	✓			There are no specific positive or negative impacts from this proposal based on care experienced.

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

				<p>it is likely they will require bespoke timetabling and outreach supports from their mainstream school to engage in their continued education.</p> <p>For pupils who have experienced absence or disruption due to illness, mainstream schools will need to adapt to support their learning but the 1:1 support the children currently receive could reduce.</p>
<p>Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)</p>	<p>There is a reputational risk to the Council in its failure to provide a targeted support service for children who require it. This will be mitigated by the outreach support provided by their mainstream school.</p> <p>There is a risk of an increase in references to ASN Tribunals for independent special school placements, disability discrimination or failure to effectively support 14+ transition plans for children with a disability. Developing positive relationships and supports between parent and learners and their mainstream schools will mitigate this.</p>			

	<p>Evidence of Due Regard</p>
<p>Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):</p>	<p>Every School Cluster have outreach resources in the form of Family Support Workers and Inclusion Support Workers who can work to support these young people to engage in their education should the service cease. If the proposal is agreed, we will ensure our engagement process is accessible for all young people impacted.</p>
<p>Advance Equality of Opportunity:</p>	<p>Currently the ILS has a supported ACE programme at Forth Valley College which advances equality of opportunity for these learners. As part of the work that will take place should the proposal proceed for consideration, the service will be looking at how Pastoral DHT's in mainstream schools can best supported this moving forward.</p>
<p>Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):</p>	<p>The proposal is not applicable to this duty.</p>

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	No	
Councils	No	
Education Sector	Yes	<p>If the service ceases, it is likely that more applications for will be made to Independent Special Schools with very small group settings, e.g. Donaldson's and Starley Hall, as well as increased demand for placements within our Secondary Additional Support Centres (ASC's) .</p> <p>The future of the ACE programme with FVC would need to be considered if the service ceases.</p>
Fire	No	
NHS	Yes	Similarly, CAHMS attend the Cottage to support and assess identified young people who are unable to attend the CAHMS clinic in person and this would need to be relocated elsewhere.
Integration Joint Board	No	
Police	No	
Third Sector	Yes	Counselling services for all Falkirk Council young people during the summer are currently delivered at the Cottage so would need to be relocated elsewhere.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.	Skills Development Scotland have a partnership with the Cottage to promote and support 14+ transitions. This would need to change to partnership with individual schools should the ILS cease.	

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
Disability & Health	Young People	<p>It is important we ensure that all local catchment mainstream schools plan appropriately to ensure an offer of education that is accessible for all children and young people. Work will take place, supported by our central services and local networks, to share good practice and support schools to ensure there is an educational offer for all their pupils.</p> <p>Every school cluster has a SEF funded Family Support Worker to support attendance and attainment and they will be required to support these young people to engage in their education.</p>	Kerry Drinnan	01/08/2025	Service Plan
Disability & Health	Young People	To consider consenting to parental requests for Donaldson's Vibe (In and outreach Health and Wellbeing Service) Placement for the most at risk young people. (Each placement costs £8,000 for 3-5 days placement package)	Kerry Drinnan	01/08/2025	Service Plan

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

Are actions being reported to Members?

Yes

If yes when and how ?

This will be considered as part of the Council's 25/26 budget proposals in March 2025.

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	No	
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	Yes	There are clear identified impacts on a small group of young people based on Age, Disability, Sex & Health. Whilst mitigating actions will be fully implemented, these mitigating actions may not completely remove the impact on these young people or the risk to the Council.
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Paul Wilcox</i>	Date:	05/02/2025
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:	Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	No
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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA	Whilst there is evidence to understand the breakdown of the pupils and how the service is run, there has been no appropriate engagement in place.	
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Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes	If YES, please describe: There is acknowledgment that the impact on children and young people, and intersectional characteristics, and the mitigating actions are used as justifications to continue with the proposal.
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LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes	The service has shown to be vital for service users, and the proposal to remove this provision will impact their life opportunities more negatively than their peers (does not promote equality of opportunity).
MEDIUM	No	
LOW	No	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	<i>Jon Reid</i>	Date:	19/02/2025